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ELT as a multidisciplinary endeavour:  
Growing through collaboration  
Selected papers from the 41st FAAPI Conference



# FAAPI

SAN JUAN 2016

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**Selected papers from the 41st FAAPI Conference**

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## **From the editors**

Once again, we have been asked to co-edit the Selected Papers which are annually published as a result of the FAAPI Conference in Argentina. It is an honour and a new collaborative endeavour we are happy to share with the readers of this volume.

The Selected Papers collected here illustrate the multidisciplinary and dialogic nature of ELT in its practice and research dimensions. The 16 chapters respond to the following main themes in this order: sex education in language education, technology and writing development, visual literacy, pronunciation and learning strategies, Intercomprehension in Germanic languages, content and language integrated learning in higher education, genre-based writing, textual organisation, vocabulary instruction and teacher cognition, pronunciation, metaphors, intercultural competence, teacher beliefs, content and language integrated learning in secondary education, resultative constructions, and last but not least, materials development informed by systemic functional linguistics.

As outlined above, the contents of the contributions show a myriad of interests among colleagues in Argentina. They also indicate the multiplicity of research avenues which coexist. Readers will find instances of action research, quantitative approaches, case studies, mixed-methods, and qualitative tools. Readers will also find contributions authored by experienced colleagues together with novice collaborators, who have experienced the process of having a paper published for the first time in their incipient professional careers. Therefore, we find ourselves at the intersection of a multiplicity of avenues which show varied trajectories, research foci, classroom practices, and educational settings across Argentina.

It is our wish that collaborative and multidisciplinary practices in ELT spread, expand, and examine the complex and fluid landscape of situated language learning from an emic stance as it is through this process that we empower ourselves and others, develop a voice, and value the works of others around us.

The Editors

## From FAAPI President

All knowledge begins as uncommon — unrecognized, undervalued and sometimes unaccepted. But with the right perspective, the *uncommon* can become the *exceptional*. (Elsevier page <https://www.elsevier.com/about/empowering-knowledge>)

We are now well within the XXI Century. Technology continues advancing in unprecedented manners. Drones, suitcases that can crawl behind you around the airport like your pet, avatars, exoskeletons that allow for increased strength and endurance, gravitational waves, which open a new era of astronomy, promising advances in the cure of cruel diseases, smartphones gradually smarter and smarter begin to be part of our daily reality. And what about the ELT arena in Argentina?

I reckon new perspectives of teaching and learning, professional competences; modern educational technologies through interdisciplinary approaches have modified the landscape as new scenarios have changed our role, our students' role in what used to be called a class-room. New generations surely have different mental representations of a class-room.

I am very happy to announce that, in my humble opinion, the opening quotation above can be applied to ELT professionals in our country. There certainly is a critical mass of colleagues involved in reflection and research as part of their professional practice. I find it that this number is gradually increasing. If we consider that the production is going up, there is evidence that the levels of teacher education are on the rise. On what premises I say this? Just from reading the articles published in the Selected Papers of the 2016 FAAPI Conference.

The theme "ELT as a Multidisciplinary Endeavour: Growing through Collaboration" sounds inviting. It is common wisdom that ELT has always resorted to other disciplines to carry out the enterprise of having our students learning more while at the same time we try to be better teachers ourselves.



With change always as a backdrop, the formation of the modern teacher both as professional, and as the creative person possessing professionally creative competence becomes a great endeavour, if we consider it as an attempt to do something new or difficult. And as long as we are committed to our profession with passion, the result is inescapably growth as a person and as a teacher.

I would like to begin meandering around the notions of mutidisciplinarity and collaborative, that appear to stand out in the name of this Conference.

In order to analyse the meaning of multidisciplinary, I went into a study on interdisciplinary research (IDR) which prompted an expanding literature on the issue. In the words of Wagner et al. (2011), disciplinary distinctions isolated members in the 19th and 20th centuries. Nevertheless, the mid-century isolation of disciplinary silos gave way quickly to boundary crossing. Klein (2008) expounds “the most widely used schema for defining IDR (multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary) derives from a typology presented at the first international conference on interdisciplinary research and teaching in 1970.”

Getting down into the term I would like to dig deep, we find that in this study, Stokols *et al.* (2003, 2008) pose that

multidisciplinary approaches juxtapose disciplinary/professional perspectives, adding breadth and available knowledge, information, and methods. They speak as separate voices, in encyclopedic alignment, an ad hoc mix, or a *mélange*. Disciplinary elements retain their original identity. In short, the multidisciplinary research product is no more and no less than the simple sum of its parts.

Let us analyse the concept of collaboration in the context of ELT. Paraphrasing Forbes in Nevin et al. (2007), the ideology of collaboration efforts at higher education was addressed by a faculty member at the University of Aberdeen, who collaboratively developed an inter-agency collaboration teaching module. They pose that when teachers with different

backgrounds and different discourses draw upon different approaches to research, the theoretical diversity and methodological pluralities increase a kind of social capital that is likely to benefit all those involved. Whereas for initial teacher education, Ibrahim et al. (2015) explain that the collaborative learning method makes students depend on each other in their pursuit of knowledge and makes the learning process more meaningful and interesting. When students are working in groups, they will be a part of a community whereby everyone will lend support to one another. This will provide the academic and social support in learning that students need.

From the reading of the papers, I can arrive at the conclusion that there is a community of teacher-researchers in the country who presented at FAAPI 2016 San Juan. The papers selected show an array of distinct and interesting works, which tap into different topics, contexts, approaches and methodologies. The external recognition of the professionalism of Argentinian ELT teachers appears to do justice to their dedication.

Now, I invite you to sit comfortably at your PC, laptop, tablet or smartphone and have a look at the Table of Contents. I am sure you will find articles that will be most alluring and useful for your context of work. Indulge in reading. These colleagues have decided to share with all of us and who knows who else, the product of their endless hours of work, their expertise and their conclusions. Hopefully, new doors will open, and new avenues of research will be paved in the name of lifelong learning.

Cristina Emilia Mayol  
FAAPI President

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# **1 An interdisciplinary and intercultural approach to the construction of gender**

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## **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to present an ELT experience carried out with students in their second year at the UNL Secondary School in Santa Fe. This project is framed within Comprehensive Sex Education and it deals with the social and cultural construction of gender through an interdisciplinary approach.

The foundation of this work is Law 26150 (*Ley de Educación Sexual Integral*) (Ministerio de Educación, 2006), in which Comprehensive Sex Education is described as an integral part of basic education and as a universal right. According to this law, sexuality instruction is considered vital for the construction of identity and plays a major role in individual and social development.

This proposal is also based on the Teaching for Understanding Framework, in which deep understanding of a topic is fostered by integrating knowledge from different disciplines to get a new perspective on it (Project Zero, 2006). Therefore, in this project gender was dealt with interdisciplinarity in a workshop in which English, Portuguese, History, Psychology, Physical Education and Computer Studies teachers worked collaboratively to enhance students' understanding of this social and cultural construct. A comprehensive insight on gender was gained by dealing with different concepts associated with this topic in different subject areas: gender stereotypes in the media

(English and Portuguese), the construction of gender over time (History), sexual citizenship (Psychology), the body as a social construction (Physical Education) and the protection of personal data on social networks (Computer Studies).

Through the analysis of sexism in the media, the English class mainly contributed to the development of the students' intercultural competence, allowing them to engage with complexity and multiple identities and thus preventing them from falling into stereotyping (Byram, 2002). The learners carried out a series of tasks aimed at cultivating both their linguistic competence and awareness of the social and cultural construction of gender. A thorough description of these activities will be made and the students' performances will be shared in order to account for the success of this interdisciplinary work.

## **2. Contextualization of the project and theoretical framework**

### **2.1. Comprehensive Sex Education**

Comprehensive Sex Education has become a central part of basic education since the 26150 Law (*Ley de Educación Sexual Integral*) was issued (Ministerio de Educación, 2006). According to this law, all citizens, including learners in both in private and state educational institutions, have the right to receive comprehensive sexuality instruction, which embraces biological, psychological, social, affective and ethical aspects. The National Comprehensive Sex Education Programme (*Programa Nacional de Educación Sexual Integral*) (Ministerio de Educación, 2009), has the following aims: to incorporate sexuality instruction in educational institutions so as to contribute to the harmonious, balanced and permanent development of people; to ensure the dissemination of reliable information about all the aspects involved in comprehensive sex education; to promote a responsible attitude towards sexuality; to prevent sexual health problems, and to guarantee equal opportunities and equality of treatment for both men and women. This programme is to be implemented in all the levels of the educational system, from preschool to tertiary level. Each institution is supposed to adapt this proposal to its sociocultural context, ideology and its members' values and beliefs (Ministerio de Educación, 2006).

As regards the role of languages in Comprehensive Sex Education, it can be said that these are vital since they enable human beings to have access to shared images of the world as well as social and cultural know-how. As there is a close relation between language and thinking, teaching students to understand and produce social discourse is teaching them to think critically and act according to their thoughts. In other words, there is a close relation between discourse management and an individuals' participation in society. Therefore, it is the school's responsibility to help both boys and girls to develop communicative competence, which will enable them to have access to information, express and support their viewpoints, construct shared images of the world and participate in the production of knowledge. Additionally, the teaching languages at school can contribute to fulfill the following aims that also lend support to Comprehensive Sex Education:

- foster the critical analysis of stereotypes connected with men and women's social roles;
- develop the capacity of boys and girls to take part in a discussion, support their viewpoints and elaborate conclusions;
- help them to appreciate the texts produced by both male and female writers, and promote communicative competence for the expression of students' needs (Ministerio de Educación, 2009).

## **2.2. Teaching for understanding**

The instance of interdisciplinary work described in this paper relies on the Teaching for Understanding Framework, on which the school's educational project is based. This framework is the basis of Project Zero, an educational project developed by Howard Gardner, David Perkins and Vito Perrone at Harvard University with the aim of developing effective teaching (Origins of a Framework for Effective Practice, 2008). The conceptual origins of the Teaching for Understanding project seem to be anticipated in the requirement of not only having knowledge, but also doing something with it. The notion of understanding within this framework is a performance view. That is to say, understanding cannot be directly taught, but it is best acquired through repeated

opportunities to carry out tasks which demand understanding (Perkins & Blythe, 1994). These authors explained this perspective as

a matter of being able to do a variety of thought-demanding things with a topic — like explaining, finding evidence and examples, generalizing, analogizing, and representing the topic in a new way [...]. It is being able to take knowledge and use it in new ways. (Perkins & Blythe, 1994, p.13)

Within this approach, disciplinary and interdisciplinary understanding is sought. The former, on which this paper focuses, involves the particular concepts, methods and theories in two or more disciplines that students will need to master as they address a given topic. The latter is defined as “the ability to integrate knowledge and modes of thinking from two or more disciplines to generate a new insight” (Project Zero, 2006, p. 2). In other words, “students build and demonstrate interdisciplinary understanding when they can bring together concepts and methods , or languages from two or more disciplines — for example, to explain a phenomenon, solve a problem, create a product, or raise a new question — in ways that would have been unlikely through single disciplinary means (Project Zero, 2006, p. 2). In doing this, learners come in contact with different, subject-specific, ways of verbalizing experience (“the language of mathematics”, for example) and make use of visual language to convey meanings.

Performances of understanding deal with how students build interdisciplinary connections. Since understanding is something we do, teachers have to sequence students ’performances in such a way that they move towards progressively deeper interdisciplinary understanding. (Project Zero, 2006)

In the Teaching for Understanding Framework, when choosing a topic to be taught, care should be taken that it is a multifaceted one. The topic has to be relevant to the students and the teachers, feasible with regard to the students’ capabilities, the context as well as the teacher’s expertise and resources, and be clearly contextualized. That is to say, students should be given a sense of why a certain topic matters and why it is worth approaching it in an interdisciplinary way. Regarding assessment, its function is characterized as “not limited to grading a final project but seeks to support students (and inform instruction) along the way” (Project Zero, 2006, p. 11). Teachers should make



sure that they provide students with a learning experience aimed at an understanding that is purposeful, disciplined and integrative.

### **2.3. Intercultural perspective**

A theoretical implication of this project is related to the *intercultural dimension*. According to the latest official documents that affect the teaching of foreign languages such as *Núcleos de Aprendizajes Prioritarios* (Consejo Federal de Educación, 2012), *Orientaciones Curriculares de la Provincia de Santa Fe* (Ministerio de Educación de la Provincia de Santa Fe, 2013) and *Diseño para la Escuela Secundaria de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires* (Zysman & Paulozzo, 2006), the process of teaching and learning a second language should be grounded on the basis of *interculturalism* and *plurilingualism*. In addition, at an international level, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001) emphasizes the importance of the *intercultural dimension* within the aims of language teaching. This idea may be novel for many teachers who were educated within the Communicative Approach and presents a challenge to everyday teaching practices.

The intercultural perspective takes into account the cultural component of a language and fosters the relations between the languages and cultures being spoken and the languages and cultures being learnt. In this perspective, Spanish is recognized as the language of schooling and the other languages and cultures present in our country are also taken into account. Byram (2002) says that the *intercultural dimension* in language teaching aims at developing learners as *intercultural speakers* or *mediators* who are capable of interacting with complex and multiple identities and it also seeks to avoid the stereotyping which results from perceiving someone through a single identity. Moreover, it involves seeing the interlocutor as an individual whose qualities are to be discovered, rather than as a representative of an externally assigned identity. Intercultural communication is founded on respect for individuals and equality of human rights as the basis of democratic social interaction.

Accordingly, the *intercultural learner* does not sacrifice his/her own mother tongue and the culture associated with it but enriches them through the learning of other languages. In an intercultural approach, a central objective of language education is to

promote the favourable development of the learner's whole personality and sense of identity in response to the enriching experience of otherness in language and culture (Council of Europe, 2001).

The intercultural learner develops an *intercultural competence*, i.e. their ability to understand people of different social identities and interact with them as complex human beings with multiple identities and their own individuality (Byram, 2002). The students' intercultural skills and know-how include

- the ability to bring the culture of origin and the foreign culture in relation with each other;
- cultural sensitivity and the ability to identify and use a variety of strategies for contact with those from other cultures;
- the capacity to fulfill the role of cultural intermediary between one's own culture and the foreign culture and to deal effectively with intercultural misunderstanding and conflict situations, and the ability to overcome stereotyped relationships (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 103-104).

These ideas have a great impact on language teaching in the context of globalization. Never before have different cultures been in such close contact through travel, the media and information technologies, which creates an urgent need for developing cultural understanding and critical thinking skills in the twenty-first century classroom.

### **3. Our project**

The project was carried out at *Escuela Secundaria de la Universidad Nacional del Litoral*, founded in Santa Fe in 2014. The school's mission is to introduce several innovations in education, one of which is related to the implementation of the Teaching for Understanding Framework, which aims at fostering a more comprehensive understanding of contents. In order to achieve this, the school year is organized in three terms organized according to different teaching arrangements: *Asignaturas* (Subjects), *Seminarios* (Seminars) and *Talleres* (Workshops).

The first term, *Asignatura*, comprises the first half of the year. When teaching a subject, teachers work independently as done in traditional schools all year long, focusing on their subjects and helping students to learn the concepts, ideas and skills that are specific to each discipline. The second term, *Seminario*, takes the next two months. The concepts, ideas and skills dealt with in the subjects are further developed to engage students more deeply and thoughtfully. This implies a more independent and autonomous performance on the part of the students, who do research work and concentrate on a final product. In the last two months, teachers of different disciplines work collaboratively in *Talleres* to help students learn facts and skills in a larger context of understanding and transfer. It is during this period that interdisciplinarity is materialized.

Our project was carried out in one of the workshops and dealt with the social and cultural construction of gender. A comprehensive insight on this topic was gained through the contributions of different disciplines. History focused on the construction of gender over time; Psychology concentrated on sexual citizenship; Physical Education addressed the body as a social construction and Computer Studies discussed the protection of personal data in social networks. Finally, English as well as Portuguese concentrated on sexism in the media. What follows is a description of the tasks that were done in the English class in order to broaden the students' understanding of the concept.

We worked with two mixed ability groups of thirty students in their second year. The students' level of English was between A2 and A2+ and they had English classes once a week for two hours. With the purpose of approaching sexism, we challenged the students to produce non-sexist videos or posters in which they could show their understanding of the topic.

In order to guide the students in the fulfillment of their final productions, we developed a sequence of learning tasks. To introduce the topic of sexism, the movie "Mona Lisa Smile" (Johanson & Newell, 2003) was shown. This movie depicts the conservative and traditional lifestyle of American society in the 1950s. The main character, Katherine Watson, is a UCLA graduate who comes to the renowned all-female Wellesley College to teach art history. She is determined to confront the outdated community and institutional conventions and, in so doing, she inspires her

students to challenge the social roles they are supposed to fulfill. A series of activities was designed for the analysis of the gender issues featured in the film. These included some comprehension questions about the plot, completing a summary of the story, making descriptions of the characters' personalities, gathering information about the historical background and comparing the role of women in the 50s to their current role.

Then, the learners watched sexist advertisements from the 50s and 60s and were asked to analyze them focusing on the product being advertised, the target audience, the social roles of men and women depicted in the commercials, the message and the intended effect on the viewers. Following this, the students looked at some sexist adverts on the internet and reflected upon the same aspects as they had done before.

After that, a set of persuasive techniques commonly used in advertising was introduced and the students were asked to recognize them in the commercials and posters previously shown (Fedon, A. *et al.* n.d.; British Broadcasting Corporation, n.d.). Then, they looked for adverts from the 2010s and examined them considering their target audience, message, effect on the readers or viewers and the persuasive techniques used in them. Next, the students were invited to choose a product and make a sexist advert and a non-sexist version of it. Some of the students' productions are shown below.

Fig. 1 Sexist advertisement of spaghetti.



Fig. 2 Non-sexist advertisement of spaghetti.



Fig. 3 Sexist advertisement of perfume.



Fig. 4 Non-sexist advertisement of perfume.



#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that the work done in the English class fostered the critical analysis of stereotypes connected with men and women's social roles, as the official documents propose. Analyzing the film and commercials and posters from the 50s and 60s contributed to the learners' critical thinking and gave them the opportunity to express their viewpoints on the topic. The students showed great motivation to fulfill the final task, which is reflected in their interesting productions. Moreover, intercultural competence seems to have been developed. Not only did the students get to know men and women's lifestyles in a foreign culture but also managed to see men and women as individuals whose qualities are to be discovered, rather than as representatives of a social role that is externally assigned. Language teaching seems to have promoted the favourable development of the learners' whole personality and sense of identity through the enriching experience of otherness in language and culture. The disciplinary understanding gained in the English class contributed to an integrative understanding of the concept of gender. A wide view on this multifaceted topic was achieved through collaborative work among the teachers of different disciplines, which would have been unlikely by dealing with this concept in a single subject area.

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## **2 The collaborative construction of knowledge through online forums for the development of sociocognitive writing skills**

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### **1. Purpose of the study**

Changes in the production and access to information generated by information and communication technologies (ICTs) require new skills and offer cognitive and social opportunities for the construction of knowledge and collaborative learning. As a consequence, new literacy teaching models are required. In fact, as Area and Pessoa (2012) suggest, “appropriation of meaning and multimedia expression are the new terms for the old concepts of reading and writing” (p. 17). In this context, literacy implies developing not only instrumental but also cognitive and social skills to interact with information and transform it into knowledge in a collaborative manner. Even though online learning has increased in popularity, applications of web-based language learning (WBLL) have not yet been matched by research in higher education (Dalla Costa & Gava, 2009; García, González & Ramos, 2010; Sun & Chang, 2012). The purpose of this study is to analyse the impact of a blended learning project carried out in the virtual classroom of an English Language II university course for the collaborative construction of knowledge in an online learning environment. The specific objectives are the following: (a) To carry out a forum debate in the virtual classroom as a pre-writing activity, (b) to analyse the types of collaboration and the cognitive skills employed by the students, and (c) to carry out surveys to obtain the students' perceptions of this online activity. In the following sections, we present a theoretical framework about the educational role of ICTs and reflect on the implications of the collaborative construction



of knowledge in WBL environments and the usefulness of forum debates. We also describe the research design of this study. Finally, we present its results and limitations, pedagogical applications and future lines of research.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

Nowadays, ICTs play an important educational role as they offer cognitive and social opportunities for the construction of knowledge and collaborative learning. These are two competences included in digital literacy, also called *multiliteracy* and *new literacy* by authors who coincide that literacy requires more complex processes than the instrumental use of technology (Area & Pessoa, 2012).

The first cognitive opportunity offered by ICTs, the construction of knowledge, is not a new concept. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) already referred to the difference between *knowledge telling* and *knowledge construction*, that is, transforming information critically. However, this difference is especially relevant in today's society. As Area and Pessoa (2012) explain, in the new scenario of ICTs, it becomes necessary to distinguish between information and knowledge as data alone do not reflect the capacity to use them meaningfully. Then, literacy represents the appropriation of cognitive abilities to interact with information and transform it into knowledge in a critical way.

For this study, the classification of intellectual abilities proposed by Bloom (1971) was adopted. He identified six cognitive levels: *knowledge*, *comprehension*, *application*, *analysis*, *synthesis* and *evaluation*. Each of these levels is based on the previous ones and represents a higher order ability. Assuming that the development of critical thinking can be facilitated by the collaborative construction of knowledge by means of forum debates, we will apply Bloom's taxonomy to describe the levels of cognitive abilities evidenced in students' contributions to the debate.

The second social opportunity offered by ICTs, collaborative learning, is not a new concept either although research in this area is scarce (Egbert & Petrie, 2005; Juárez de Perona, 2007; Zheng, Warschauer & Farkas, 2013). Educational environments in which cooperation is fostered were already present in Piaget's (1970), Bruner's (1990) and Vygotsky's (1978) constructivist approaches. These theorists put emphasis on

transforming information into knowledge by means of a relational process (Tedesco, 2003). Therefore, knowledge is no longer something transmitted but constructed in the interaction with others (Bruffee, 1999).

These new cognitive and social opportunities for the collaborative construction of knowledge generated by technological changes have implications for the teaching of EFL. First, it is necessary to analyse the changes that ICTs are producing in education and rethink the new competences required. This implies teacher training that includes not only an instrumental but also a pedagogic approach to ICTs and an awareness of their potential and limitations.

Second, to foster responsible participation in virtual learning environments, it is essential to develop *digital citizenship* (Jenkins, 2011 in Meneses Rocha, 2013), which implies the critical and reliable use of technology. In this sense, Area and Pessoa (2012, p. 17) refer to “the formation of the citizen for the digital society” who acts with ethical principles to exercise his/her freedom of expression.

Third, Warschauer (2004) maintains that it is crucial to rethink a new pedagogy for the teaching of EFL. As students will need to communicate in English using the Internet in their professional lives, it is necessary to develop online writing skills so they can participate in these new communicative scenarios. In fact, the incorporation of Internet tools, such as forum debates, to education is no longer an option but a necessity.

The forum debate constitutes a pedagogical tool that can enrich the teaching and learning processes. It reflects constructivist concepts since it enables students “to use technologies for experiential learning tasks, to carry out tasks in collaboration with others, to reflect on the process (...), and to increase control over their own learning” (Bikowski & Kessler, 2002, p. 28). All of these factors help increase students' motivation.

Salmons (2008, p.4) proposes a taxonomy of online collaboration that provides a framework to understand the levels of collaboration in virtual learning environments. These levels include: 1) dialogue (participants exchange and summarise points of view and take group decisions), 2) peer feedback (students exchange comments to create a final version of a task), 3) parallel collaboration (each participant completes a component of a task that is combined in a collective final product), 4) sequential

collaboration (participants work over prior contributions and these are combined), and 5) synergic collaboration (a final product is created mixing individual contributions). Even if students complete a project independently, if they integrate their efforts to obtain a result, we can describe their work as collaboration, which offers opportunities to construct knowledge.

### **3. Literature review**

The impact of ICTs on the teaching and learning processes is an aspect to which attention has been devoted over the last years. Several works that systematise the state of the art in relation to ICTs in education have been published (European Commission, 2006; Drent & Meelissen, 2008 in Area, 2010). At international level, Sánchez-Upegui (2009) carried out a study on the use of the virtual forum at Universidad Católica del Norte in Colombia. The results indicate that interaction was oriented to monologic styles without a conversational structure, and messages centered on personal response. However, one of the conclusions of this study is that the forum constitutes a valuable tool since it eliminates time and space barriers and, if used effectively, it fosters the collaborative construction of knowledge.

At national level, Davis, Fernández & Mailhes (2013) investigated the construction of knowledge by means of virtual forums in EFL teaching at UNLaM. The results revealed a positive attitude towards the virtual forum as it enabled students and teachers to exchange messages in a cooperative way. Such communication led to the development of writing skills. Therefore, forums constitute one of the most cooperative virtual learning environments to develop language skills and have a potential that should be exploited.

In the context of this study, Gava (2012) studied the collaborative construction of knowledge by means of forums and blogs in English Language II, at Facultad de Lenguas, UNC. The results led to the development of a taxonomy of collaboration in forum debates and a classification of critical thinking skills and collaboration in blogs. The author concludes that these tools facilitate collaboration and the application of higher order skills that are relevant for EFL learning.

#### 4. Research design

This study was carried out in a virtual classroom of an English Language II course belonging to the second year of the English Language Teaching, Translation and Licentiate programmes. The participants were 32 students belonging to two groups of that course and two teachers.

This project constitutes a quasi-experimental study based on quantitative and qualitative methods. For data collection, questions for the forum debate and a student survey were designed. Before the forum debate, training in the types of collaboration and levels of cognitive abilities for the construction of knowledge in virtual environments was provided. During the debate, which was open for three weeks, the teachers published a question related to a syllabus unit, *Leisure and Holidays*, as a pre-writing activity. The teachers' role was to moderate the debate and summarise students' contributions. Finally, a topic for an expository essay in which students could use the knowledge constructed in the debate was uploaded.

Once the forum debate had finished, the analysis of students' contributions was carried out to determine the levels of collaboration and cognitive abilities used. After the students had submitted their essays, a post-study survey was carried out to obtain the students' perceptions of this activity.

#### 5. Results

The analysis of the data showed that the students' contributions to the debate were indicative of collaboration by means of online dialogue among the participants —the first level of collaboration identified by Salmons (2008). The students constructed knowledge collaboratively as they exchanged ideas and summarised key points. Besides, the six levels of higher order thinking skills identified in Bloom's (1971) taxonomy were applied. The following exchange illustrates three of the six levels: *knowledge* and *comprehension* of the topic and *application* of background knowledge and personal experiences to develop main ideas.

Student 1:        *One of my favourite things to do in my free time is reading and, although I do it for pleasure, I know it also contributes to my*

*learning process as a language student. I also think choosing how to spend our free time has a lot to do with our background and everything we were exposed to during our childhood. For example, going back to my personal experience, I think, probably, I like reading because I grew up in a home where everyone read a lot during their free time.*

Student 2: *I also agree with the point of view regarding the role of parents. Free time is the moment when we can do activities we enjoy. Personally, I enjoy reading and travelling. I read throughout the year whereas I only travel on holidays. I consider both of them enrich the mind, and also widen one's horizons.*

In addition, the students' contributions show instances of *synthesis, analysis and evaluation*—the other three levels of higher order skills. As the following exchange shows, the students analysed specific examples by making meaningful connections among reading materials and summarising main points. The level of evaluation becomes evident as they assessed the value of leisure time activities that contribute to intellectual and spiritual growth.

Student 3: *Hello everyone, yes, participating in our communities is very important. "El Sistema" is a kind of social project aimed at young people from poor socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds in order to change their lives. Similarly, the Wallace Foundation also seeks to improve the relationship youngsters have with the arts. Both of these educational projects work towards humanitarianism.*

Student 4: *I agree. It seems to me that leisure time activities are indispensable. They help us improve and foster our spiritual and moral growth. In my case, I enjoy spending my leisure time listening to music, and contributing to Bell Ville's charitable association. From my point of view, a day off work not always*

*makes us lazy. As we learned in this unit, leisure is the time for doing something useful and depends on which kind of activities we do. To summarise, it is very interesting to see the activities that can be developed for the growth of the soul and the spirit.*

As these contributions show, students constructed knowledge collaboratively by selecting and sharing information related to the topic. Thus, the content of the forum evidenced the participants' knowledge, their ability to comprehend the topic, apply it to a new situation, analyse, synthesise and evaluate others' contributions.

Once the project was completed, a post-study survey consisting of closed- and open-ended questions was administered. The students' answers show that 59% of the participants were familiar with the use of online forums although 94% had not used them as a pre-writing activity. Many students referred to advantages of the forum debate. For instance, most of them said that it was very useful to learn from their classmates' contributions and improve their writing skills. They also maintained that this debate was beneficial since there were no time or space constraints. Some students expressed that they could learn more about digital technology and believed that forums might be helpful for future translators. They also mentioned that this debate was useful to learn new vocabulary. Some pointed out that this online environment was suitable for those who are introverted and tend not to participate in face-to-face classes. Interestingly, 72% of the participants admitted that the forum was conducive to the development of the skills of analysis and synthesis. In general, students stressed the benefits of using the virtual classroom, of the guiding role of the teachers, and of developing group work skills. These are some of their opinions as regards the usefulness of the forum:

*- The forum was very useful to get new ideas and different opinions and use them in my writing. There were different ways of relating the material I hadn't thought of before.*

*- The forum helped me include new ideas in my essay and also new words, so I could improve my vocabulary.*

- *It is good to exchange ideas over the Internet through a forum. It doesn't take much time to participate and we do not have to be at a certain place to do this.*
- *I could not participate in the forum, but I got some ideas. I would like to participate in the next one.*
- *We can analyse the topic because there are many opinions and the teachers also participate, so the ideas are more precise and the content is better organised.*
- *We share detailed information and then teachers help to synthesise ideas.*
- *The forum was good for collaborative learning because we had to read previous posts before we wrote our contributions. I think it was a good strategy to work in teams.*

The analysis of the students' contributions and opinions shows that this online task appears to have been conducive to the collaborative construction of knowledge by means of the application of higher order skills and the meaningful negotiation of ideas through dialogue, key elements in collaborative learning settings (Bruffee, 1999).

## **6. Conclusion**

The online activity carried out enables us to state that the cognitive and social opportunities offered by ICTs seem to favour the collaborative construction of knowledge in the context of this study. In fact, the forum debate evidenced the first level of collaboration proposed by Salmons (2008), dialogue, and the higher order abilities proposed by Bloom (1971). In this activity, roles changed as the teacher was no longer the expert but the guide while students played an active role transforming information into knowledge.

One of the limitations of this project is the twofold role of the teacher as a researcher and participant. The participant role may influence the interpretation of results owing to subjective perceptions of students' performance. In order to have an additional instrument to analyse the data and triangulate results, the student survey was

carried out, which enabled us to corroborate the information obtained from the analysis of the forum.

It would be interesting to analyse the impact of forum debate on subsequent writing tasks to determine whether the collaborative construction of knowledge evidenced in students' contributions to the forum and surveys is also reflected in their productions.

We would like to conclude quoting Litwin (2001), an Argentinean education expert, who synthesises the impact of ICTs on higher education: “In the same way as for a long time chalk and boards enabled us to learn how to write, the channels of communication that are open today enable us to help, collaborate and work with each other enriched on the basis of the construction of communities in which it is possible to learn solidarity and the value of working with others.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Authors' translation.



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### **3 The young learner's textbook as a visual model of interaction**

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#### **1. Introduction**

For young L2 learners, who are still in the process of achieving literacy in their L1, interaction with printed texts is mostly visual (Kress, 2010, p. 46ff.). So, textbooks for children are true multimodal texts that include verbal language, images, numbers, color, spatial relations, among many other resources. Here we ascribe to Kress & van Leeuwen's (2006) approach to communication that "...treat[s] forms of communication employing images as seriously as linguistic forms... [motivated by] ...the now overwhelming evidence of the importance of visual communication, and the now problematic absence of the means for talking and thinking about what is actually communicated by images and by visual designs" (p. 17). For meaning-making, written texts and multimodal texts are similar in the type of interaction they establish between text and reader/viewer (Walsh, 2006, Table 1), but with multiple modes come additional resources with particular affordances. As such, multimodality alters the potential for communication by offering resources that, in the words of Kress (2010), help express "...social relations of the maker of a message and its 'reader' – the relation of 'command' for instance. For the designer of the learning materials the question becomes one [...] of the design of social relations" (p. 143). Based on these ideas, this paper presents a study of textbook images as signifiers of social relations. Rather than

focusing on how materials designers get to design these social relations, as indicated by Kress above, we seek to describe the nature of the interaction that textbooks create with their users visually in order to raise awareness of the potential of L2 materials for the development of visual literacy and critical thinking. Section §2 frames our work in the field of Systemic Functional Linguistics and visual literacy and it introduces the categories of analysis. In Section §3 we present a corpus study of interaction in textbook images. The results, discussed in Section §4, indicate complex ways in which textbook images seem to model interaction visually. We conclude by referencing some pedagogical implications of this work for language education.

## **2. Theoretical background**

In contemporary society, the concept of literacy has expanded to include a variety of modes of communication, or ‘multiliteracies’. One important component of multiliteracy is *visual literacy*, defined as the “the ability to construct meaning from visual images” (Giorgis, Johnson, Bonomo, Colbert et al., 1999, p. 146). Visually literate readers/viewers observe critically and are able to use the language of images and design in strategic ways. The importance of becoming visually literate rests on the proposal that each mode –verbal and visual – contains different information and affordances for meaning construction (Kress et al 2001), so visual literacy equips young learners with useful social and communication skills for becoming communicatively competent. This paper constitutes our first attempt at describing one type of meanings visually depicted in EFL textbooks. We assume that these visually transmitted meanings can be exploited to develop visual literacy as well as critical literacy (and critical thinking) through reading / viewing in the L2 class because of the way in which literacy practices “...constitute part of the very texture of wider practices that involve talk, interaction, values and beliefs” (Gee, 1990, p.43).

Linguistic accounts are insufficient to attend to non-verbal modes of communication, so for the critical analysis of images we draw on the socio-semiotic perspective put forward by Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which views language as a system of choices through which we make meanings. Alongside its focus on the social, SFL features a tripartite view of meaning making. Every instance of language use contains “three metafunctional strands of meaning” (Halliday &

Matthiessen, 2014, p. 662). These three strands of meaning enable us “to represent our experience of the world” (ideational metafunction), “to interact with others in the world” (*interpersonal* metafunction) and to “create coherent and cohesive texts” (Derewianka & Jones, 2010, p. 9). According to Walsh (2006), when reading print-based texts interpersonal meaning is “...developed through *verbal* ‘voice’ - through use of dialogue, 1st, 2nd, 3rd person narrator”. In turn, when reading multimodal texts, Interpersonal meaning is “...developed through *visual* ‘voice’: positioning, angle, perspective – ‘offers’ and ‘demands’” (p.35). Social-semiotics helps us analyze how textbooks interact with their users visually (interpersonal meaning) because it “...attends to general principles of representation: modes, means, and arrangements... [and can tell us] ...about the *resources* for making meaning and their potentials as *signifiers*” (Kress, *op cit.*, p. 59). In order to explore the nature of interaction between the textbook and the user, we will analyze (a) *Contact* and (b) *Point of view*.

*Contact* between participants and/or viewers has been described in the literature in terms of *Demand and Offer*. In the case of a demand, the participant is portrayed as looking at the viewer’s eyes, inviting the viewer to enter some kind of imaginary relation with the image. In the case of an offer, no contact is made between the participant and the viewer; rather, the participant is represented as an item of information or contemplation (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 118). *Point of view*, on the other hand, is associated with the angle between participant and viewer, serving to represent various subjective attitudes. The point of view determined by the vertical angle has been related to power: If the represented participant is seen from a high angle, the viewer appears to be in a position of power with respect to the person depicted in the image, and vice versa, if the person in the image looks down on the viewer, the latter would seem to be in a less powerful position in relation to the image. In the following section we report on a corpus study of images that shows that EFL textbooks targeted at young learners seem to visually engage in particular types of interaction with their users.

### 3. Study

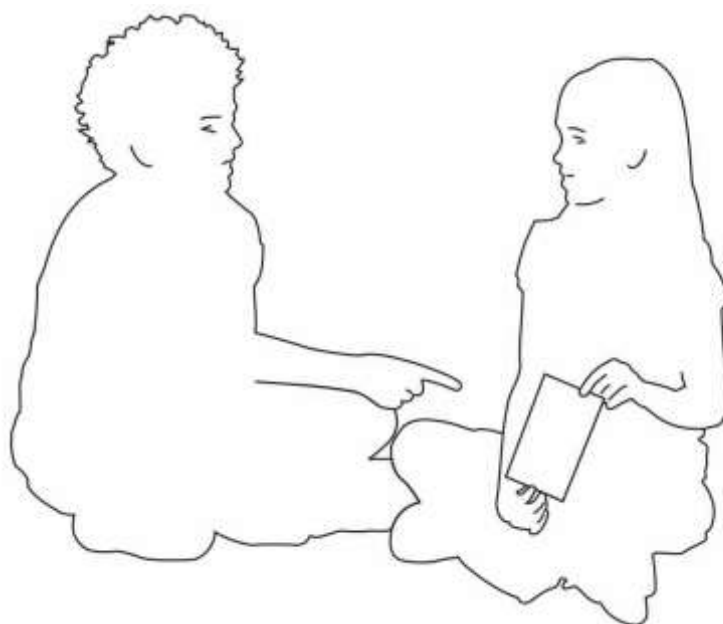
#### 3.1. Methodology

We analyzed a corpus of all the images of school-aged children in two randomly selected chapters of three TEFL textbooks commonly used in Argentina to teach YLs (*English Adventure 4* (EA4, Units 1 and 2), *Fairyland 4* (FL4, Units 2 and 6), and *World Wonders 1* (WW1, Units 4 and 6). The textbooks, from three different publishing houses, were chosen based on the richness of the images in each of them and they were textbooks that the first author was using at the time of data collection. Each individual child depicted was identified and manually coded for Contact (Offer, Demand) and Point of view (High, Mid, or Low vertical angle). Individual images were included if they were photographs, drawings, or digital images depicting school-age children (as opposed to babies, toddlers, teenagers, or adults).

#### 3.2 Results

A total of 266 images that met the criteria were identified in the textbooks and manually coded. Repetitions of exactly the same child (commonly found in textbooks) were also included in the analysis. Excluded from the coding, however, were a handful of images where the individual appeared so distant and lacking in detail that it was difficult to identify any distinguishing features. The analysis shows that very few participants (N=18/266) in the textbooks look at the viewer's eyes as inviting the viewer to enter in some kind of imaginary relation with the image (i.e. Demand). The majority of participants in the textbooks (N=248/266) do not make direct contact with the viewer as they are represented as an item of information or contemplation (i.e. Offer). The analysis of Point of view reveals that most of the textbook images analyzed are portrayed from a High vertical angle (191/266), fewer images are depicted from a Mid vertical angle (60/266) and very few from a Low vertical angle (15/266). The participants in Figure (1) exemplify Offer and a Mid-High point of view.

Figure 1. Outline of example from the corpus (English Adventure 4, p. 18)



#### 4. Discussion

In this study, we explored one important aspect of meaning-making in the processes of reading and viewing, namely the constitution and maintenance of interaction between the producer and the reader/viewer (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 114). Since our goal is to create awareness of the potential of multimodality in L2 textbooks for the development of multiliteracies by young L2 learners, we analyzed images of ESL textbooks targeted at that audience. Our analysis of *Contact* and *Point of view* has shown a particular configuration of the interaction that textbooks seem to initiate with their users.

In terms of the *Contact* category, we have found that textbooks offer more than they demand. Similar results were obtained in a study comparing images in school science books between Australia and Taiwan, which found that the compositional arrangements of pictures favored Offer over Demand (Ge, Chung, Unsworth, Chang, & Wang, 2014). What type of meaning is being created through configurations of this type? How do learners interact with this type of images? In a language event, Offer tends to elicit acceptance as a response. If we assume the same expected response

beyond the linguistic domain, then visual interaction predominantly presented as Offer would be expected to also trigger acceptance, and thus function as a model for the learner to imitate. It could be argued that when there is no invitation for the reader/viewer to interact with the participants depicted -no eye contact-, the reader/viewer is expected to take a passive role in line with the view of knowledge as a commodity that is offered and which students are expected to accept (see Apple 2014, p. 152). Our analysis of Contact suggests that by interacting with readers/viewers predominantly via Offer, L2 textbooks visually model interaction for their users/viewers rather than interacting directly with them. The final effect of this dynamics of multimodal interaction between a textbook and its users could be characterized as inconsistent. By this we mean that the interaction of textbooks with their users is direct through the verbal mode (through instructions and direct forms of address); however, we do not find that textbooks engage through the visual mode in a similar way. Instead, images tend to be presented as models to be looked at, to be described, to contextualize samples of language use; in other words, to be passively imitated or assimilated.

Regarding *Point of View*, our study has found that most images are presented from a mid to high vertical angle. The high angle configuration has been traditionally interpreted as showing that the power balance is on the side of the reader/viewer (Martin 1968, p. 37-8). Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) describe it as “the angle of maximum power [, ...] orientated towards ‘theoretical’, objective knowledge [..., one which] contemplates the world from a god-like point of view, and puts it at your feet, rather than within reach of your hands” (p. 145). Young learners’ textbooks address first of all children, but because they are pedagogical artifacts they also address teachers. So we could ask whose lens is being used to look at the ‘world’ created by the textbooks. Children’s visual field is different from adults’, they view the world from a different stance. Because they are not fully grown physically (shortness) their patterns of visual interaction with the world are usually from a mid- low angle. They interact either with peers (mid angle) where the point of view is acknowledged as one of equality or they interact with adults (low angle) where the balance of power is tilted towards grown-ups. On the other hand, textbooks are also for teachers (textbooks for young learners are not intended to be used autonomously) and teachers’ visual perception is that of adults, i.e. they see the world from a mid- high angle. So it is possible to assume that the designers might have made their visual choices with a teacher’s lens and at the expense of



children's perspective. If we consider children as the ultimate target readers/viewers of the textbook, it seems that the images fail to address them. Below we explore two more hypotheses for the point of view exploited in L2 textbook images based on its potential effects on learners.

The depiction of participants from a mid- or high-angle point of view could alternatively result from the intention to elevate users to a more powerful position given the skewed distribution of power between the human participants depicted in textbooks and textbook users. It is a given that human participants, even peers, depicted in the L2 textbook always top learners in L2 proficiency, which helps explain the authoritative place from which L2 textbooks relate to their users. By including images of L2 'expert' users, textbooks are presenting these 'more capable' participants as models of verbal interaction. The use of high-angle point of view could thus serve to subtly increase the textbook user's power. This result in Point of View contrasts with the findings of Ge et al. (2013) that report a majority of mid and low vertical angle images in science books. It is important to note, however, that images in science books mostly depict plants and animals, both of which would rank lower than human participants in the animacy / salience scales that typological studies have found that human languages distinguish (Comrie 1989) and who do not enjoy the same authoritative position as the expert L2 users in language textbooks. Thus, the mid and low angles seem very appropriate in science books in order to elevate less salient entities in order to turn them into objects of study and to notice details and characteristics.

One last hypothesis for the use of mid- to high-angle point of view would be motivated by the pedagogical need in language teaching to contextualize instances of use. For verbal language, contextualization has been shown to aid comprehension and teachers usually train students in vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension strategies that involve attention to context of use. For visual language, high angle seems to be the most effective point of view in order to provide a sense of context (Osgood & Hinshaw, 2014) and such context can indeed be used for image interpretation. Camba (2008) suggests how in order to effectively interpret images (by counting and attribute description, two activities prevalent in L2 teaching to young learners), images need to be carefully chosen to ensure that they portray 'depth', which would enable the identification of the different elements that make up the image and so that learners can also figure out the relationships between them in the spatial context. The

operationalization of context as setting or image background, however, needs further specification because initial evidence suggests that the mere presence of visual vectors indicating transactional processes or even the presence of verbal processes between two participants depicted in the textbooks are not enough interactional complexity to justify the need for greater image contextualization by means of high angle in our data set. However, further data would be necessary to test this hypothesis.

A limitation of the present study is that only two dimensions of interpersonal meanings were analyzed. Future explorations of interpersonal meanings depicted visually should include categories such as *involvement* and *social distance*. In addition, a larger number of textbooks should be analyzed and learner data on the impact of different types of interaction should be also investigated. We believe, however, that this first attempt at exploring the types of meanings made visually in young learners' L2 textbooks can serve the purpose of raising awareness about the importance of visual (and critical) literacy.

#### **4. Conclusion and pedagogical implications**

This study has explored how L2 textbooks interact with their users via the visual mode in complex ways that model interaction as consisting of offer and acceptance, as well as power relationships. What are the implications of these visual configurations and of the potential meanings thus created for language learning? Serafini (2010) recognizes that even when images have permeated all aspects of learners' life, there is a noticeable lack of pedagogical concern about images and about how they 'collaborate' with verbal language in meaning-making. Our contention is that teachers should be trained to identify and raise students' awareness of the relationship between language and images as well as between images and the textbook user because of the ways in which meaning emerges through the interaction of multiple modes in present-day society. If teachers are trained in the potential of such semiotic resources, they can help their students attain visual literacy. This pedagogical transfer can be done by encouraging children to observe the interaction patterns in the textbook and discuss such configurations with peers and teacher. By focusing not only on who is depicted but on how it is depicted, teachers can help children interrogate visuals depicted in the textbook by asking questions like: What calls your attention first? Why? Are the people looking at you? Are

they looking at each other? What does this suggest? Are you looking up at the people? Are you looking down on the people? What does this suggest? Beyond reflection, children may also be asked to draw observed participants showing different types of contact, from different angles and may even be invited to provide the discourse of the interaction. By drawing people interacting and exemplifying different types of discourse young learners would gain an insight into dimensions other than language which add to communication and which are part of language education. For the language learner, the L2 is not only the object of study, but also a window into different and critical ways of understanding by reading or viewing the world. With this in mind, L2 teachers should embrace the amazing opportunity afforded by the foreign language class of fostering critical thinking and developing multiliteracies in young learners. Interaction is traditionally conceived as a realization made through language. In our study we have explored ways in which interaction is shown through images. There is still much more to learn and understand about the interaction between communication modes and textbook users and even more about how images model (communication) behavior and how to help learners critically deconstruct their meaning.

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## 4 Teaching English vowels with the aid of ICT

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### 1. Introduction

In my experience as a teacher of English Phonetics and Phonology in the EFL Teacher Education and the BA in EFL programmes offered by the Department of English Language and Literature at Facultad de Filosofía, Humanidades y Artes, Universidad Nacional de San Juan, I have observed that occasionally Spanish-speaking students encounter certain difficulties in the acquisition process of English phonology. In this paper, I report on a project implemented in this institution, in the subject *Introducción a la Pronunciación*. This experience explores difficulties related to the production of vowel sounds /æ, ʌ, ɑ:/, which tend to be problematic for L2 learners (Avery & Ehrlich, 1992; Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin, 2011; Jenkins, 2000; Kelly, 2000; Kenworthy, 1987; Leceta, 2015; O'Connor & Fletcher, 1989). Taking into account the characteristics of our educational context and based on empirical evidence that stems from previous research in the field (Leáñez & Leceta, 2012, 2013; Leáñez, Leceta & Sánchez, 2013; Castro & Leceta, 2012; Leceta & Castro, 2014; Leáñez, Waasaf, & Leceta, 2015), I describe a pedagogical intervention that integrates the systematic use of ICT -Information and Communications Technology- in the aforementioned subject.

The theoretical-methodological foundations of this project are rooted in a cognitive view of second language acquisition, which states that declarative knowledge -Know What- can be automated and transformed into procedural knowledge -Know How- (Anderson, 1983) (Anderson, Fincham, Qin & Stocco, 2008). As to the integration of ICT, I use the TPACK framework where three forms of knowledge, Content (CK), Pedagogy (PK) and Technology (TK) interact (Mishra & Koelher, 2006), within the parameters of a blended learning model (b-learning), in which face-to-face instruction and web-based online learning are combined (Leáñez, Waasaf & Leceta, 2015).

With respect to the organization of the activities, I follow the principles of the intuitive-imitative and analytical-linguistic approaches, complemented by bottom-up (with a focus on smaller elements, such as phonemes) and top-down (focusing on larger chunks of language) approaches (Dalton & Seidlhofer, 1994) and the stages proposed by Celce-Murcia et al. (2011), for they provide an appropriate framework for teaching L2 pronunciation within a communicative orientation.

The design integrates low-tech tools such as desktop applications Word, PowerPoint, Audacity, and high-tech tools, for example, Prezi, Cmaps, podcasts, e-mail, forums, FAQs, social web *Facebook*, *youtube*, *gdocs*, seamlessly integrated in a digital learning platform called *Haiku Learning* (<https://www.myhaikuclass.com/do/account/login>). The combination of these synchronous and asynchronous tools both enriches face-to-face interaction and encourages collaborative work.

This paper describes the theoretical and methodological principles that frame the project, its aims, contents, the technological decisions made and the challenges faced during its implementation.

## **2. Some theoretical considerations**

The integration of technology from an intercultural and multilingual perspective implies the articulation of technological, pedagogical and subject matter contents, which may bring in new modes of interaction and knowledge construction in the classroom. The exploration of technological resources allows me to reflect upon the role of ICT as tools that mediate in “the psychological processes involved in the teaching and learning of a foreign language” (Correa & Rodríguez, 2013, p. 2) (my translation).

As regards the theoretical principles that frame this project, from a psycholinguistic perspective, I adhere to a cognitive conception of learning, specifically the Adaptive Control of Thought (Anderson, 1983, 1989; Anderson, Fincham, Qin & Stocco, 2008). This model posits that declarative knowledge can be automated and transformed into procedural knowledge. ACT is a general cognitive model of skill acquisition that can be applied to those aspects of second language learning, such as pronunciation, which require proceduralization and automatization processes.

With reference to the integration of ICT, I follow the principles of a b-learning model, which combines both synchronous and asynchronous modes in different moments of the teaching and learning process, as a complement to face-to-face interaction (Sharma & Barret, 2007). From this standpoint, the incorporation of ICT may affect the way in which subject matter knowledge is dealt with. In this sense, Cope and Kalantzis (2009) express that the key is not in the logic or in the technical specifications but rather in the new ways in which knowledge is created, communicated and made accessible.

One concept that emerges in this setting is ubiquitous learning, which may be defined as learning in any location at any time. According to Burbules (2009a, b) and Coll (2008), this notion not only fosters the appearance of new educational contexts as part of the transformation processes that affect traditional educational spaces, but also bridges the gap between learning processes that take place within the classroom or beyond it. In this regard, Dussel (2011) expresses that the ubiquitous presence of portable devices allows us to be in several places at the same time, causing the borders of physical spaces to blur. Communication environments these days are marked by multimodality, in which written meanings are closely connected with visual, spatial, tactile, gestural, audio and oral modes of meaning (Kalantzis & Cope, 2016).

Taking into account these characteristics, I set out to redefine my teaching practices, with a view to giving way to the intersection of technological, pedagogical and content knowledge. This intersection results in the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge, which lies at the core of TPACK (Mishra & Koelher, 2006). Following Magadán (2012, p.10), TPACK states that the integration of technology implies understanding “the pedagogical techniques that use technology in a productive way to teach specific subject matter content; the way technology might contribute to compensate for the difficulties students face and how technology may be used to build subject matter knowledge” (my translation).



### **3. The project**

#### **3.1. Contextualization**

As it was aforementioned, this pedagogical intervention is carried out in the subject *Introducción a la Pronunciación*, delivered on a seven-hour per week scheme during the first term of first year in the EFL programmes offered by the Department of English Language and Literature at FFHA-UNSJ. This course follows the organization of a workshop, which allows students to learn while doing, with its central focus on the practice of English pronunciation. It is worth pointing out that one of the aims of the area Phonetics and Phonology is that students, as prospective teachers of English, acquire “an effective and acceptable linguistic competence that allows them to become good models for their future students” (Luchini & Ferreira, 2009, p. 3) (my translation).

As regards the students that generally take this course, most of them are 18-25 years old. On a smaller scale, some students are young adults who have pursued undergraduate studies in other careers, while others have resumed studies and work extended hours. In relation to digital literacies, it has been observed that most of the students have an e-mail account and frequently use social media, mainly *Facebook*; however, they do not always exploit these digital competences with learning purposes.

#### **3. 2. The design**

Firstly, I establish the goals, aims and contents that shape the project. As regards the goals, these range from creating favourable conditions for students to recognize similarities and differences between English and Spanish vowel systems to cultivating a stimulating environment that incorporates a series of digital resources to foster the development of English pronunciation. With respect to the aims, we expect students not only to recognize and produce the different qualities of /æ, ʌ, ɑ:/, but also to reflect upon their own learning processes, so as to be able to assess achievements and difficulties and transfer what they have learnt to other contexts. Concerning contents, I include phonological content related to the development of skills to improve English pronunciation and content oriented to the development of metacognition, so that students are able to analyse their own learning process, and collaborative work, through

the use of traditional and digital tools as a means to build knowledge and favour participation.

The following step involves the design of the activities, according to the different stages proposed by Celce-Murcia et al. (2011). The first stage, *description and analysis*, includes a brief description of /æ, ʌ, ɑ:/. In this particular case, with the aim of raising awareness of the linguistic features of the target sounds, videos, graphic representations and animations are used. Afterwards, the vowel phonemes are presented in a contextualized communicative situation. The next phase, *listening discrimination*, focuses on form and involves formal practice with the target sounds in minimal pair exercises. In this instance, I include resources such as IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) fonts to write phonemic transcriptions, Wells' pronunciation CD-ROM (2008), which integrates visual and oral information to describe the phonological structure of words, and *Audacity*, a free open source digital audio editor, to record samples of oral production.

In the next stage, *controlled practice with feedback*, minimal pair exercises, short exchanges, rhymes, tongue twisters, etc. are included, with special attention drawn to the highlighted feature in order to raise learner consciousness. Here, besides using the previously mentioned tools, I introduce vowel sound recognition exercises, designed in the application *Hot Potatoes*, a set of programmes that allows you to produce interactive web-based exercises. Moving on to the next phase, *guided practice*, I propose exercises, such as information-gap activities or cued dialogues that enable the learner to monitor the perception and production of the target sounds. Finally, in the *communicative stage*, I suggest using less structured, fluency-gearred activities that call for learners to focus both on the form and content of utterances. In this stage, students may produce podcasts to be shared in the website *Voicethread*. All the activities are both oral and written and are integrated into the digital learning platform *Haiku Learning*.

With reference to the resources incorporated in our classes, the Pronunciation CD-ROM (Wells, 2008) is a fundamental tool that contributes to developing linguistic awareness of different aspects of pronunciation. The CD-ROM displays multimodal information, the transcription of a word, which helps students visualize the complex relationship between spelling and pronunciation, as there is not a one-to-one correspondence between these variables in English; the auditory information, that is the

pronunciation of the word in RP or American English; possible variations in the pronunciation of certain words, accompanied in some cases by graphs showing preferences in the use of certain forms over others. The systematic use of this resource allows one to deal with pronunciation-related difficulties as they arise in the classroom.

Another resource integrated in the class is IPA fonts, which are essential to digitalize phonemic transcriptions. This practice is central in the acquisition process of English pronunciation for it helps students separate their perception of English sounds from its graphic representation, and it also provides a means to store the pronunciation of words and phrases (Leáñez, Waasaf, Leceta & Castro, 2014).

As regards listening practice and oral production -reading aloud and speaking-, students make podcasts in the software *Audacity* and the website [www.voicethread.com](http://www.voicethread.com). The latter is a cloud application that does not require software to install. It allows students to upload and share files, presentations, images, audio files and videos, which can be viewed and commented on by peers and teachers. In general terms, using this kind of applications promotes oral work, contributes to autonomous learning and keeping the affective filter low, which helps introverted students feel more at ease and motivated to carry out activities of oral production.

All the activities are integrated in the online platform *Haiku Learning*, a learning management system hosted in the cloud which offers tools that allow teachers to review, edit information, and administer and publish contents from different multi-media resources. Its interactive features include assignments, attendance, wiki projects and polls, available to both teachers and students. These characteristics heighten students' involvement and collaboration. Furthermore, students have the possibility to share samples of oral practice, phonemic transcriptions, systematizations of conceptual content, and thus optimize the development of skills related to the acquisition of English pronunciation. Likewise, students may monitor their academic performance, regarding class attendance, task completion and tests results. Leáñez et al. (2015) state that the use of virtual settings complements and enriches face-to-face interaction, as it opens new spaces of interaction in the pronunciation class.

Regarding evaluation, formative assessment is a suitable option because it is closely linked to the development and regulation of learning activities (Feldman, 2010). To evaluate students' oral production at the phonetic level, I suggest using a checklist that

includes two sections, one that measures overall impression in terms of fluency, intelligibility and rhythm, and one that assesses the production of vowel and consonant sounds. A semi-structured online questionnaire can be administered to gather the subjective appraisal of students' opinions. This is a valuable source of information that not only enables me to have a deeper appreciation of this new setting mediated by Web 2.0 technology, but it also allows me to make the necessary adjustments accordingly.

### **3.3. Challenges**

Implementing a pedagogical intervention mediated by technology poses at times a series of challenges. From a technological perspective, occasionally, the computer equipment may be insufficient and there may be problems with connectivity. Sometimes the system workability is constrained by the institution's Internet connection and therefore, it is not possible to do activities online. In this case, students may be organised into small groups and free open source software that does not require broadband connection may be used.

From a pedagogical-didactic perspective, I notice the roles of teachers and learners are reset. Teachers become "mediators in the construction of knowledge" (Salinas, 2004, p. 7) (my translation), with special emphasis on making learning more accessible. According to Cobo & Moravec (2011, p.99), one of the challenges teachers face these days is to be able to incorporate technology as a "bridge between different types of knowledge" (my translation), rather than as a means in itself, beyond the age of the students involved, the activity to be done or the device in use. Learners, for their part, adopt a more active role, as there is greater interaction between teacher and peers, which may help them develop "more autonomy and self-regulation of their own learning processes" (Leáñez, et al., 2014, p 12). Similarly, I have perceived that students are regular Internet users but they do not always harness its potential to improve learning.

## **4. Conclusion**

Two ideas have guided me into the design of this project. One is helping students improve their English pronunciation and the other is whether using ICT could act as a

tool to foster L2 learning. I have outlined a unit of work that integrates varied digital resources to complement face-to-face teaching in the subject *Introducción a la Pronunciación*, focusing on three vowel sounds, specifically /æ, ʌ, ɑ:/, whose acquisition brings certain difficulties to our Spanish-speaking students.

In light of the motivations and challenges posed by the proposal, I assume that the current paradigm of connectivity invites new ways of communication in my classes and demands greater participation, “blurring the boundaries between authors and audiences, creators and consumers, knowledge makers and knowledge users” (Kalantzis & Cope, 2016). In this sense, the integration of technology may act as a “window of opportunity to bring about new ways of teaching and learning” (Lugo & Kelly, 2011, p. 7) in the hope of making the learning process more flexible and more autonomous.

To conclude, the ultimate challenge is to incorporate technology as a means that stimulates, generates, connects and replicates knowledge in a continuous way, regardless of the resources being used. This pedagogical intervention mediated by ICT signals the beginning of a process of technological appropriation that helps learners not only to improve the acquisition of English pronunciation, but also to transfer the newly acquired knowledge to new situations and contexts.

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## **5 Foreign Language vocabulary learning: teacher cognition and its relationship with teaching and learning**

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### **1. Introduction**

In this presentation we describe a research project whose aim is to find out about EFL teachers' cognition and how it shapes their vocabulary instructional practices. Teaching vocabulary entails the development of learners' lexical competence, which is characterized as knowledge of the different dimensions of vocabulary and the ability to use lexical items to communicate in a given language (Council of Europe, 2001; Laufer, 2005). To these knowledge and competence bases some authors add "speed of lexical access and strategic competence" (Laufer, 2005, p. 223) as well as lexical availability (Jiménez Catalán, 2014, p.v).

In previous projects we have focused on different learner external and internal factors that influence vocabulary learning. The first project dealt with an external factor: the characteristics of the lexical component of twelve elementary level EFL and German coursebooks for adolescent and adult learners commonly used in different settings in the city of Córdoba (formal and non-formal education). To that end we inspected a) the lexical content of one particular semantic field (free time activities), b) the activities through which words and word combinations are introduced and elicited and c) the presence and characteristics of the vocabulary learning strategy component. The main findings related to the EFL coursebooks are reported in López Barrios, Alcázar and Barboza (2013), Helale, Villanueva de Debat and San Martín (2013) and Helale, López Barrios and San Martín (2014). The second project delved into some learner internal factors that affect vocabulary learning, namely beliefs, self-concept and strategy use. With the purpose of finding out about the impact of these factors on the vocabulary

acquisition of elementary level learners of EFL and German we carried out a mixed-methods study in which we employed a questionnaire, an interview and vocabulary tests. The semi-structured questionnaire was completed by 138 adolescent and adult learners of both languages in both formal and non-formal settings, and these subjects were also required to demonstrate their vocabulary knowledge. For this purpose, two progress tests designed to test recognition and retrieval of a selection of the vocabulary items dealt with in class were implemented, one at mid point and the other towards the end of the course. Additionally, a subset of 30 learners were interviewed in order to clarify possible mismatches in their answers to the questionnaire items and to allow them to expand on their perceptions of vocabulary learning. The results of the questionnaire were compared with the test results so as to determine a possible relationship between the internal factors under investigation and the learners' vocabulary knowledge. Some of the findings are informed in the following contributions: Alcázar and Altamirano (2016), San Martín and Helale (2015) and López Barrios and Villanueva de Debat (2015).

The study proposed in this paper is motivated by the need to contribute to the understanding of the different factors involved in vocabulary teaching and learning. After having thrown light on the materials perspective and the learner's perspective, we now intend to look into a new learner external factor: teachers' beliefs about what constitutes effective teaching and learning of vocabulary and how teachers materialize their beliefs in their actual teaching and testing practices.

In the following sections we review the main related literature, lay out the objectives, methodology and possible impact of the findings.

## **2. Background**

Cognition is a multidimensional and inclusive concept involving a person's beliefs, knowledge, perceptions, intuitions, attitudes, among others. On the basis of these interrelated aspects teachers construct their worldview, and this, in turn, influences their pedagogical practices (Borg, 2006). Furthermore, EFL teachers' beliefs account for the role and importance they attribute to the systematic treatment of vocabulary teaching, also known as explicit instruction, and to the incidental teaching of lexical items or

implicit instruction, as in the provision of varied input containing the target vocabulary. Similarly, a distinction between implicit and explicit learning is also made and teachers' views related to the potential influence of both modes of learning will also affect their practices (DeKeyser, 2003). The availability of explicit and implicit teaching and learning should be amenable to analysis as both are necessary to the development of lexical competence (Weimer-Stuckmann, 2014, p.67).

Lack of articulation among teachers' beliefs, representations and knowledge and their classroom practices has been studied particularly in the field of grammar teaching (Basturkmen, Loewen & Ellis, 2004; Farrell & Lim, 2005; Borg & Phipps, 2009). Other studies illustrate a disagreement between teachers' beliefs and classroom practices due to the influence of individual and contextual factors (Pennington & Richards, 1997). In this perspective, Borg (2006) points out that inconsistency between what teachers believe and what they actually do in class could be explained by studying the numerous complex interactions that exist between teachers' cognition and the specific characteristics and elements of the classroom context.

In vocabulary teaching, studies that inquire into teachers' perceptions about vocabulary learning and how these affect classroom practices are scarce. One of them compares teachers' beliefs about ways of teaching vocabulary and their impact on students' lexical performance (Hassankiadeh, Jahanda & Khodabandehlou, 2012), whereas Amiryousefi (2015) investigates different aspects of vocabulary teaching and learning and their relevance for teachers and students. Other research compares the vocabulary teaching beliefs of both student teachers and teacher trainers (Macalister, 2012) or those of teacher trainees and in-service teachers in relation to different cultural contexts (Gao & Ma, 2011). All of these studies involved a great number of participants and used surveys as the only or the main instrument. Unlike these, Weimer-Stuckmann (2014) studies the issue from the perspective of three teachers and uses a multiplicity of instruments for collecting data.

The studies reviewed have all been carried out in other countries and we have not found previous research addressing teacher cognition regarding the development of lexical competence in the context of elementary EFL courses (A1-A2 according to the CEFR). This is why the intended study is of justified necessity.

### **3. Aims of the study**

In our proposal we intend to inquire into the relationship between the vocabulary teaching and learning beliefs and the practices of EFL and German teachers in public and private institutions in our city, in both formal (secondary schools) and non-formal (adult education) contexts, in the latter, in extensive and intensive courses. By carrying out the proposed study we seek to contribute to a better understanding of the process of vocabulary teaching and learning so as to inform classroom practice, curriculum development and materials design. Teachers' foreign language vocabulary teaching and learning beliefs will be identified and relationships between these and the teachers' teaching and evaluation practices will be determined. The lexical component of the materials used in class will be analyzed in terms of their lexical content and the types of vocabulary learning activities contained.

### **4. Methodology**

Ours is a descriptive study that follows a mixed-methods approach and includes instruments such as questionnaires and interviews, as well as data obtained from class observations, class materials and samples of progress tests. The questionnaire we plan to design is a semi-structured Likert-type survey that will be adapted from similar instruments used in studies such as those by Amiryousefi (2015), Hassankiadeh, Jahandar and Khodabandehlou (2012), Gao and Ma (2011) and Macalister (2012). Items will tap into the teachers' agreement or disagreement regarding vocabulary learning and teaching beliefs as well as into their practices by indicating if they perform a number of actions when teaching vocabulary and how frequently they do it. Data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics to establish frequencies and also qualitatively in order to find the extent to which the beliefs match the self-reported practices. Semi-structured interviews will also be carried out towards the end of the courses observed in order to clarify possible uncertainties found in the data and to allow the subjects to expand on certain issues.

Classes, teaching materials and tests are the other sources of data that will complement those obtained from the survey and the interview. We plan to observe three classes in the second term (end of July to end of October) in order to have an impression

regarding the vocabulary teaching practices deployed. For this end we will construct a structured observation grid in which we will register the words and word combinations presented or recycled by teachers as well as those whose meanings learners ask about or use at the instructor's request. Other information to be recorded will focus on the types of vocabulary learning activities or the meaning clarification techniques used by the teachers. Additionally, we will analyze the lexical content of the teaching materials used in the classes observed in order to estimate the extent to which the core vocabulary of the lesson is treated in class, as well as the types of vocabulary learning activities in the materials. Lastly, we will analyze the tests done during the observation period in order to consider the importance of the vocabulary component in progress evaluation. The data obtained through these instruments will allow us to comply with the objectives proposed for the study. The questionnaire and the class observation grid will be piloted before they are implemented so as to test their validity and reliability.

## **5. Expected outcomes and impact**

Our findings are expected to provide an empirical basis that will contribute to a better understanding of the processes of foreign language vocabulary teaching and learning. Results will be presented at conferences and published, and we plan to organize postgraduate courses and professional development sessions so as to reach both academically and praxis oriented audiences. Additionally, we hope the findings of the study to enrich teaching practice, and to contribute to our students' training as future teachers. Moreover, our findings could provide useful information to improve materials design.

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## 6 Metaphors of technology as collaborative beings in popular computer magazines

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### 1. Introduction

It is widely accepted that metaphors in popular science and technology publications contribute to the recontextualization of specialized knowledge. As constituents of the technological and scientific register, they play a key role in explaining, describing and structuring new concepts. However, certain popular computer magazines, like *PCWorld* and *PCMagazine*, tend to use metaphoric expressions in everyday language register. These everyday conventional metaphors, which personify technology in different life domains, make it apparent that their use carries more than the traditional function of reconstructing expert knowledge.

Cognitive functional researchers agree that metaphors transcend the limits of rhetorical ornaments. They are in fact ideological [1] resources which hide particular representations of the world. Metaphors create latent structures of meaning and, as such, they have a strong effect on the way we construct and produce our own discourse. As a consequence, their importance in EFL teaching and learning cannot be neglected.

Magazines like *PCWorld* and *PCMagazine* are frequent reference sources in the field of informatics. Many university students as well as graduates typically read these publications under the assumption of their scientific and technological objectivity, transparency and impersonality. As hidden ideology comes naturally into play for an acquiescent uncritical reader, developing metaphor competence in university reading comprehension courses appears to be challenging.

The aim of this paper is to illustrate the cognitive, linguistic and functional aspects of metaphor use in the magazines above and, at the same time, to provide some insight into their ideological implications. It is assumed that a better understanding of

metaphoric language and their linguistic and ideological potential would lay the foundations for raising students' critical metaphor awareness.

## 2. Theoretical framework

Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Lakoff (1987) and Johnson (1987) define metaphor as a conceptual phenomenon which implies understanding one domain of experience in terms of another. In this regard, a conceptual metaphor consists of a *source domain* (the conceptual representation used to understand another conceptual domain); a *target domain* (the conceptual representation that is understood in terms of the source domain) and a *source-to-target mapping* (the conceptual correspondences between the constituent elements of the source and target domains).

Other authors (Charteris Black, 2004; Cameron, 1999; Goatly, 1997) stress the importance of their textual and discursive aspects. Since language is the medium through which cognitive metaphors find their expression at surface level (word, clause, sentence), metaphoric expressions emerge as the linguistic evidence for metaphor interpretation.

Metaphor is then seen as a unit of discourse (the *topic term*) that refers or colligates unconventionally to an object, process or concept (the *vehicle term*) on the basis of similarity or analogy (the *ground*) (Goatly, 1997). It is thus possible to establish a cognitive-linguistic correspondence between *target domain* ↔ *topic term*, *source domain* ↔ *vehicle term* and *mapping* ↔ *ground*.

When considering metaphor in use, sociocultural dimensions are incorporated by integrating a) pragmatic theories, that interpret metaphor with reference to the purposes of use within specific discourse contexts, and b) lexico-grammatical functional theories, that conceive language as a resource to shape social and cultural meanings. These meanings entail conceptual aspects of ideology (Fowler, 1991; Zanoto, Cameron & Cavalcanti, 2008).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), a perspective on the examination of society that is discursively manifested (Young & Harrison, 2004), asserts that the ideological attachments of metaphors are central for their critical studies; by representing one aspect

of experience in terms of another, metaphors highlight some features of reality and hide others. Metaphors are thus conceived as strategic tools used to reconstruct the established categories and transform the perception of reality (Fairclough, 1989; Wodak & Meyer, 2003).

As ideology is at work in the lexico-grammatical configurations of a language, most critical studies (Fairclough, 1995; Fowler, 1991; van Dijk, 2003) refer to Halliday's Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL) as the best linguistic and grammatical theory that draws attention to the multifunctionality of language as a form of social practice.

As Halliday (2004, p. 24) says:

We use language to make sense of our experience, and to carry out our interactions with other people. This means that the grammar has to interface with what goes on outside language: with the happenings and conditions in the world, and with the social processes we engage in. But at the same time, it has to organize the construal of experience, and the enactment of social processes, so that they can be transferred into wording.

On these grounds, the studies of metaphor, which integrate cognitive, linguistic and functional theories, provide new insights into the (critical) analysis of metaphorical interpretation. In Goatly (1997), the author draws on Halliday's ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions of language to describe what he considers the 'latent' ideological function of metaphors. He also considers in his analysis the cognitive aspects that structure the metaphorical experience of the outside world.

Charteris Black (2004) develops a critical metaphor analysis model based on the interdependency of semantic, pragmatic, cognitive and CDA dimensions. He works on the rhetorical and ideological roles of metaphor in discourse and emphasizes the importance of its persuasive function. In this respect, he returns to the Aristotelian idea that metaphors influence our beliefs and values by activating our emotional associations.

Goatly (2007) interrelates cognitive linguistic accounts of metaphor and critical discourse analysis to show how vocabulary and grammar create metaphorical patterns that shape ideologies and influence (negatively) on personal and social behavior.

What all these studies have in common is the critical intention to raise awareness about metaphor use, its hidden meanings and the instrumentality it has in discourse.

### 3. The study

On the grounds of the above theoretical framework, metaphors, personifying technology as collaborative beings in *PCWorld* and *PCMagazine*, are analysed by integrating the cognitive, linguistic and functional perspectives.

The following table shows how the different approaches to metaphor analysis integrate in this study:

APPROACHES	METAPHOR	ANALYSIS
<b>COGNITIVE</b>	<div style="text-align: center;"> CONCEPTUAL  Target Domain ↔ Source Domain </div>	<b>Cognitive</b>
<b>LINGUISTIC / FUNCTIONAL</b>	<div style="text-align: center;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> ↑ Target Domain ↓ </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> LINGUISTIC  Topic Term ↔ Vehicle Term </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> ↑ Source Domain ↓ </div> </div> </div>	<b>Lexical</b> <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/> <b>Lexico-Grammatical</b> (Transitivity of the Clause)

Table 1. Approaches to metaphor analysis

Goatly's concepts of 'topic', 'vehicle' and 'ground' are central in the work since they help interrelate different perspectives of analysis through linguistic evidence. While it may be true that metaphor meaning depends on the tension between Vehicle terms and Topic terms, this study emphasizes the analysis of Vehicle terms because they convey more metaphorical force and semantic richness.

In addition, the lexico-grammatical configurations, which structure metaphoric meaning by the interrelation of Vehicle and Topic terms, are surveyed considering Halliday's functional descriptions. Vocabulary choice determines the ideational meanings which shape the outer and inner world experience of the personified technology; the transitivity of the clause [2] allows insight into the ideational structure of the social and mental dimensions of the personification.

To give evidence in support of this particular metaphoric representation of the digital world, a sample of the corpus analysed in my doctoral dissertation is used. Due to space constraints, the analysis is based on a limited number of metaphoric expressions which are representative of the very many in the corpus.

So as to find recurrent patterns of metaphoric use, data are processed qualitatively by observation and comparison.

#### 4. Analysis

The personification of technology in the magazines above takes place when the Vehicle terms (human) and the Topic terms (non-human) interact semantically on the Grounds of the analogy HUMAN – TECHNOLOGY. These linguistic terms correspond cognitively to the Source – Target domains; the conceptual interaction between domains construes the ideational structure (Halliday, 2004) which organizes the experience of being a collaborative technology. The Ground is the product of the Mapping process which creates the analogical relations (Goatly, 1997).

In the following,

- (1) Microsoft has significantly changed Windows Update for use with SP2, placing the most critical software updates into a **friendly**, new, single step installation routine. (*PC World*, March 2004, p. 30)

the Vehicle *friendly* refers to traits which contribute to the collaborative nature in humans --helpful, inclined to support, open to new relations, showing goodwill, among others. As an adjective, it colligates unconventionally with the Topic *installation*

*routine*, a compound noun, head of the nominal phrase *a friendly, new, single step installation routine*. Applied to the Topic, underlined in the example, *friendly* personifies the installation routines which update software by assigning those human attributes.

The Ground resides in the analogy created by Mappings between the Source and Target domains such as:

SOURCE DOMAIN: friendly people	TARGET DOMAIN: friendly technology ( <i>updates</i> )
- friendly people connect with others because of their similar needs, qualities, values	- 'updates' connect with other systems because of their 'compatibility'
- they have spontaneous and not paid relationships	- they are a free service and can be automatic
- they make things easier and simpler	- they are easy to use and facilitate operation
- they create social groups	- they create networks among systems

Table 2. Metaphoric mappings created by Vehicle *friendly*

Along similar lines,

(2) D-Link's Broadband Internet / VoIP Accelerator **is coming** very soon **to help** with the Quality-of-service (QoS) technologies that establishes priorities for concurrent network activities in the business world. (*PC World*, August 2005, p. 86)

suggests that the Vehicle term *is coming ... to help* referring and colligating unconventionally to the Topic term *D-Link's Broadband Internet / VoIP Accelerator* metaphorizes technology as a human being who

- moves to a particular place (**is coming**) with a particular supportive purpose (**to help with ...**)
- is sympathetic to the other's immediate needs (**Accelerator - very soon - priorities**)
- promotes activities in interconnected and cooperating groups (**concurrent network activities**).

In this example, (1) and (2) pick up practically the same human aspects from the Source domain; the sympathy to others' needs, the creation of social groups and networks, and

the cooperating activities, all contribute to this particular way of understanding the collaborative experience in technology.

Collaborative personification is then experienced more on social (occupational) terms than on personal terms. This representation defines the intention to highlight pragmatic collaborative attitudes to make things faster at work (*single step installation or accelerator*) and to hide, among others, the affective or emotional aspects involved in collaborative attitudes.

As language descriptors, Vehicle terms organize and categorize the ideational structure in accordance with the representational nature of the different word classes; nouns represent the permanent category of things or people; adjectives, the attributes of things or people; verbs, the temporary processes; and adverbs, the circumstances.

In *PCWorld* and *PCMagazine*, Vehicle terms are drawn from nouns, adjectives and verbs. This way, the Vehicle **collaborator**, for example, yields rich and memorable representations; as a person, its physical and functional dimensions allow for vivid and visual associations. Conversely, the Vehicles **collaborate** and **collaborative**, as process and attribute respectively, provide weaker representations since associations are more mental and diffuse.

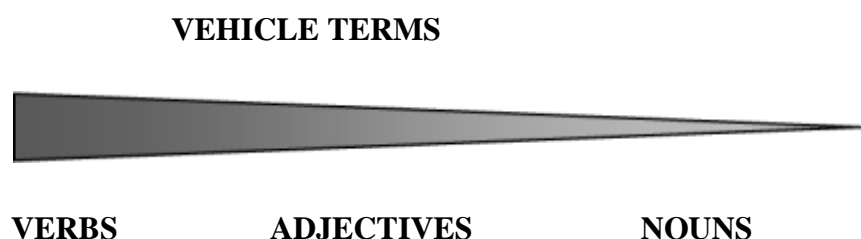
However, the cline from concrete to abstract representations does not have its focus on the Noun-Vehicle terms.

- (3) The Java Studio Creator is an efficient **collaborator** for designing user interfaces and developing applications quickly. (*PCMagazine*, September 21, 2004, p. 56)

where **collaborator** categorizes personified technology according to this particular social (occupational) role, is one of the fewest instances found. The permanent category ‘person who collaborates’ is therefore not indicative of the collaborative representation in the magazines.

Verbs (*work with, play with, integrate with, help*) and adjectives (*collaborative, cooperative, helpful, friendly*), on the contrary, are overlexicalized by repetition of the same lexical item or by (quasi) synonyms, resulting in a higher Verb-Vehicle population, as illustrated below:

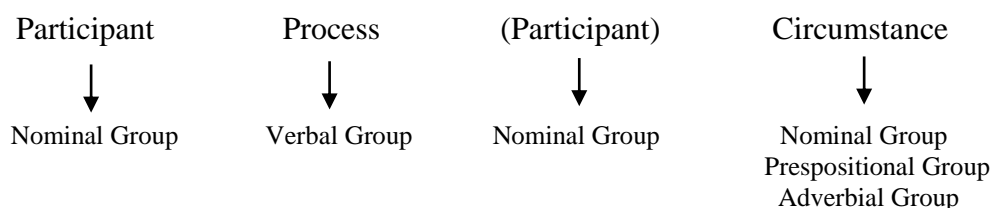




This centrality given to processes and qualities can be said to weaken the collaborative nature of technology. Experiencing technology as an ‘activity’ which requires certain ‘attributes’ is metaphorically less forceful than representing it as a social category which speaks by itself due to its semantic richness.

In addition, verbs, representing events with limited duration, and adjectives, concomitant attributions of the events, suggest a temporary representation of technology as a collaborative being; the attribute of being collaborative only exists during the development of the process of collaboration.

Halliday’s system of transitivity (see **Endnote [2]**), as part of the ideational function, contributes to deeper ideological interpretations because, as Halliday (2004) states, the concepts of process, participant and circumstance are semantic categories which explain how the phenomena of our socio-cultural experience are construed as linguistic structures. These categories are realized in the structure of the clause as,

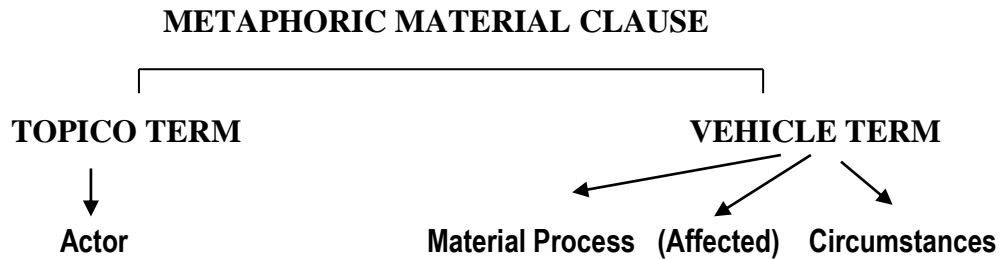


Correspondingly, this configuration can be conceptually applied to the grammatical realizations in metaphors so Goatly’s Topic terms assume the semantic role of ‘participants’ in material, mental, relational processes, and the Vehicle terms represent the ‘processes’ and ‘circumstances’ which personify the Topic.

Due to the Verb-Vehicle recurrence, the personification relies mainly on Material processes. In a Material clause, a Material process is the verb which describes an action

or event; the Actor is the participant (thing or person) responsible of the action or event and the Affected is the participant (thing or person) that the action or event affects.

A ‘metaphoric material clause’ is then conceived as,



If applied to the following metaphoric expressions,

(4) The 8 AC8 slot iMedia Center **collaborates** with radio and TV tuners in fast audio, video and photo streaming. (*PCWorld*, August 2006, p.34).

(5) Norton Antispam and Qurb apps **cooperate** so tightly with email and news clients. (*PCMagazine*, February 17, 2004, p.80)

(6) Google with some new serious upgrades will soon **give a hand** to the old boys. (*PCWorld*, August 9, 2005, p.31)

(7) McAfee Spamkiller **works** with any POP 3, IMAP, AOL or Hotmail accounts. (*PCMagazine*, February 17, 2004, p.80)

the metaphoric Material clauses read as,

	TOPIC TERM	VEHICLE TERM		
	ACTOR	MATERIAL PROCESS	AFFECTED	CIRCUMSTANCE
(4)	The 8 AC8 slot iMedia Center	collaborates (with)	radio and TV tuners	fast in audio, video and photo streaming
(5)	Norton Antispam and Qurb apps	cooperate (with)	e-mail and news clients	so tightly
(6)	Google	gives a hand to	the old boys	soon with some new serious upgrades
(7)	McAfee Spamkiller	works (with)	any POP3, IMAP, AOL or Hotmail accounts	

Table 3. Metaphoric material clauses.

According to Goatly (2000), one of the main reasons for analysing Material processes is the possibility of uncovering who is represented as the most powerful participant in the text. If the clause has an Actor and an Affected, then the Actor is being represented as powerful and responsible of the action, and the Affected come over as passive and powerless.

At first glance, The Material processes (*collaborates, cooperate, give a hand, work*) construe a cooperative interrelation between ‘hardware colleagues’ *iMedia Center* → *radio TV tuners*; and ‘software colleagues’ *Norton Antispam and Qurb apps* → *e-mail and news clients*, *Google* → *the old boys*, and *McAfee Spamkiller* → *any POP3, IMAP, ... accounts*. The Actors behave *fast, soon, tightly* in front of Affected participants who can be harmed by virus attacks, *accounts* that need *antispam* or *spamkillers*, or by their own obsolete nature, *radio and TV tuners, the old boys*.

In this regard, the Actors play the traditional ‘good guys’ role; however, in the transitivity of the clause, the Affected participants become ‘patients’ of the Actors’ actions. This means that The Actors’ technological superiority and their responsibility in the Material processes make them assume a (pre)dominant role over the Affected; as a consequence, the Affected participants turn into the passive recipients of the Actors’ supremacy.

The way Actors and Affected are named is also significant in the representation. Actors have specific and individualized proper names (trademarks like *Norton*, *Google*, *McAfee*) while Affected participants are in most cases nameless i.e. belonging to a generic and indefinite group or class (*the old boys*, *e-mail clients*, *radio and TV tuners*).

This foregrounding of Actors and backgrounding of the Affected illustrate the role of metaphors as surface realizations of intentional representations of reality. These personifications shape a social arena where there are well defined disparities. Disguised behind collaborative processes, Actors gain prominence on the grounds of the implicit weakness of Affected participants. This way, the computer magazines direct the reader's attention to the commercial intentions they hide.

## **5. Conclusion**

This study, as an example of the cognitive, linguistic and functional scope of metaphor use, has shown how the personification of technology, as a collaborative being, shapes metaphorical patterns which are ideologically mediated and respond to particular intentions.

The TECHNOLOGY IS A COLLABORATIVE PERSON metaphor construes a pragmatic representation of the collaborative reality; the figure of the 'collaborator' is practically blurred by the emphasis put on the idea of 'collaboration' as a temporary activity which has the utilitarian purpose of making things faster at work. In the representation, a social positive value, suggested in the few collaborative attributes assigned to the personified technology, is then used as an excuse to call potential consumer's attention.

In the light of these findings, conditioned by the limited extent of the study, metaphor awareness in students appears to be of primary importance. Although metaphor is ubiquitous in communication, its pedagogical usefulness has had poor attention so developing students' metaphoric competence, particularly in reading comprehension university courses, could help cope with frequent misleading interpretations in instances of detailed scientific and technological understanding.

The integration of the cognitive, linguistic and ideological aspects of metaphors into reading tasks and activities would benefit the inference and grasping of those underlying metaphoric concepts which hide the author's particular way of constructing knowledge. It is true, however, that incorporating metaphor knowledge in the language classroom requires first our critical understanding of metaphor use and this study is intended to be a little contribution in this respect.

## Notes

[1] Although the concept of 'ideology' has been related to the Marxist tradition which reduces its use to power and dominance relations, in this paper 'ideology' is understood in the wider sense of a set of opinions, beliefs and attitudes which characterize social classes or groups (Payne, 2002; van Dijk, 2003).

[2] In Halliday's functional theory, the clause is the basic lexico-grammatical unit of analysis. One of its functions is called 'ideational' and represents the inner and outer experience of the world. The semantic and syntactical system which realizes the ideational function is called the 'transitivity system'. This system construes experience as a set of processes, participants and circumstances.

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## **7 Exploring the theme and rheme organization of articles written by EFL university students in Argentina**

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### **1. Introduction**

This paper derives from a broader research project that was conducted in pursuit of a research-oriented degree and it focuses on the textual organization of information and how it affects the flow of communication.

The writing skill represents a challenge for most Argentinean students who are learning English as foreign language. One reason is the difficulty posed by information management. The purpose of this paper is to explore interruptions in the flow of information that affect communication due to the organization of information in students' writings.

### **2. Theoretical framework**

After the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a new approach to language learning was developed. It focused on the communicative function of the language and its premise was that communication is established and maintained through texts rather than through isolated sentences or words, with a specific purpose and within a specific context. Within this new perspective, a new approach to language called Functionalism was developed. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) explain that functionalism is focused on the use of the language and its unit of analysis is the text. Functional theories of the language establish that there may be differences among languages but there are functions that are common to all of them. Calzado Roldan (2002) concludes, then, that languages are different ways of expressing the same functions.

One of these theories is Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistic. This model analyses language in terms of available choices to express meaning (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). The language becomes a resource to construct meaning in social contexts. Using a language involves choosing among all the possibilities this language may offer, which are closely related to the context in which it is used (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). This theory focuses on paradigmatic relationships but it does not deny the importance of structural aspects of the language (Moss, 2011). This theory goes beyond the structural level and grammatical and phonological forms are freed from the structural restrictions imposed to them by previous linguistic approaches.

The unit of analysis in this theory is the text. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) describe the text as any instance of language that takes a certain form and carries meaning. This instance of language may be interpreted in different ways because it is a multifaceted phenomenon. Each text is language in use that has a specific function and a specific purpose in communication (Bloor & Bloor, 2004).

Within each text, Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) identify three metafunctions that occur simultaneously while communicating through this unit of meaning. Every text is a combination of three different meanings: the ideational, related to the world of experience; the interpersonal, related to the interaction involved; and the textual, related to the coherent organization of the text.

Within the concept of metafunctions, the main purpose of the textual metafunction is to serve the ideational and interpersonal ones in order to construct an organized text in which the flow of information, cohesion, coherence and continuity are not affected (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). In this sense, communication is established and maintained during the interaction between speakers of the language. According to Halliday and Hasan (1985), this metafunction is a resource used to ensure that what is said is relevant and is related to the context in which it is produced. This metafunction is realized through cohesion and the theme/rheme pattern.

The theme/rheme pattern makes reference to the organization of the clause within the text and it gives the clause a message status (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). This organization is called thematic structure and it consists of a theme that takes the first place in the clause and is followed by a rheme. This organization is the essence of this pattern (Montemayor-Borsinger, 2009).



It is important to mention that the theme/rheme pattern is not exclusively limited to the level of the clause. It can also be analyzed at the level of the paragraph (hypertheme/hypernew) or at the level of the whole text itself (macrotheme/macronew) (Montemayor-Borsinger, 2009). On the one hand, at the level of the clause, the theme extends from the beginning of the clause up to the first ideational component and it indicates the beginning of the message. In this way, the message of the clause is oriented by the theme and this element establishes what the clause is going to be about. Generally, the thematic element consists of already known information from which new information is given (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). On the other hand, the rheme may be defined as everything that comes after the theme and generally introduces new information. The rheme is considered to be the development of the theme (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

Concerning the theme of the clause, Halliday & Matthiessen (2004) describe many different types of thematic elements. The theme may be unmarked (the theme is an element of the clause that typically assumes a thematic status, for example, a subject in the declarative mood or a verb in the imperative one) or marked (those elements that generally do not assume a thematic status, for example, an adverbial in the declarative mood). The theme may also be simple or multiple. Simple themes consist of just one structural element, called topical element, which may be a noun, a prepositional phrase or an adverbial. Multiple themes consist of two or more elements. The textual theme generally comes in first and may be a continuative, a conjunction or a wh-relative. The interpersonal theme comes after the textual theme and before the topical theme and is generally a vocative, an adjunct, a finite verb or a wh-question word. Finally, the topical theme is always present and marks the boundary between the theme and rheme in the clause (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

The themes succession within a text tends to form a thematic pattern, called thematic progression. This thematic progression may be of different kinds and it gives an account of the way information is organized throughout the development of the text (Montemayor-Borsinger, 2009).

### 3. Methodological framework

This research was conducted with ten students who attended the English careers offered by Facultad de Filosofía, Humanidades y Artes at Universidad Nacional de San Juan in Argentina. Participants were between 19 and 25 years old, were in the second year of their studies, and had a B2 level of English according to the Common European Framework of Reference for languages.

Participants were enrolled in the course ‘English Language II’ and were asked to write an article about the family and the important changes that have occurred over the last 50 years.

#### 3.1. Data analysis

The analysis was conducted at three different levels. First, at the level of the text as a whole, taking into account macrotheme and macronew; then, at the level of the paragraph considering hypertheme and hypernew; and finally, at the level of the clause in terms of theme and rheme.

For these analyses, three data tables were designed. When analyzing macrotheme and macronew, the following table was used:

Macrotheme	[Macrotheme corresponding text]
Macronew	[Macronew corresponding text]

Table 1. Macrotheme and macronew.

For the analysis of hypertheme and hypernew, the data table was:

	Hypertheme	Hypernew
Paragraph 1	[Hypertheme corresponding text]	[Hypernew corresponding text]
Paragraph 2	Hypertheme corresponding text]]	Hypertheme corresponding text]

Table.2. Hypertheme and hypernew.

Finally, for the analysis of theme and rheme, this table was used:

	Theme	Rheme	Comments/Observations
Paragraph 1	1.*	**	***
	2.*	**	***
	3.*	**	***
	4.*	**	***
Paragraph 2	1.*	**	***
	2.*	**	***
	3.*	**	***
	4.*	**	***

Tabla 3. Theme and rheme.

### 3.2 . Analysis and findings

With regard to the formal aspect of the ten compositions analyzed, the following information was obtained:

Text #	N° of words	N° of paragraphs
1	251	5
2	203	1
3	373	2
4	426	4
5	329	5
6	321	5
7	508	5
8	270	1
9	481	5
10	348	5

Table 4. Formal characteristics of the written compositions.

As regards macrotheme and macronew, in 7 out of 10 compositions, the introductory and closing paragraphs coincided with the macrotheme and macronew respectively. In compositions n°2 and 8, which were written in just one paragraph, both macrotheme and macronew coincided with hypertheme and hypernew. Composition n°3 had two paragraphs and, consequently, there was correspondence between the macrotheme and hypertheme of the first paragraph but this did not happen between the first hypernew

and the text's macronew. This correspondence between the macrotheme and the hypertheme did not seem to affect the flow of information in the text.

In composition N°8, the macronew lacked a closing comment about the topics developed throughout the writing of the article.

Introductory clause	In the last 50 years the family has changed in many different aspects
Topics developed	One of the changes is “the age” that people decide to form a family
	Another important change is the number of children that family used to have in the past
	Finally, another remarkable change is the role of women in the family
Final clause complex	<u>But these days, women have an active role in society. They have become in “professionals” in different economic fields and this change of role has had a great impact of how family behaves nowadays.</u>

Table 5. Information structure of composition N°8.

This lack of closing of the topics developed throughout the text affects readers' interpretation. With reference to hypertheme and hypernew, the paragraphs in several compositions had a hypertheme but lacked a hypernew due to the fact that the last clause complex in these compositions introduced a new topic to be developed instead of consolidating the information presented in the paragraph. The following table illustrates this analysis:

Comp.	Paragraph	Hypertheme	Last clause complex of the paragraph
N° 4	3	Another custom that shows a variation is the age at which people start families at the present time.	Back in the days, they [ <i>men</i> ] were even likely to marry at an slightly older age in order to be able to have permanent jobs and some security.
N° 5	2	The first difference [ <i>between the family of the past and today's family</i> ] is size.	This is why they [ <i>women</i> ] have less time to bring up children.
N° 6	2	In the past, household chores apart from housecleaning, taking care of a family orchard and even some animals such as chickens, pigs and some cows.	With the advance of technology many basic needs were fulfilled with no need of human labor and this is one of the reasons why the size of families decreased.
	4	These economic changes also had an impact on the way people decide to organize their lives	And men usually get married at their early thirties under the same circumstances.
N° 7	2	Five or six decades ago, the family was represented by a large group of people.	However, certain values or traditions such as spending time with relatives, supporting each other, having a strong bond, among others, are being replaced by modern age values.
	3	Many years ago women would only stay at home dealing with domestic chores and taking care of their children.	Children need to be guided into the right way, and sometimes this implies putting your foot down.
N° 10	2	At the present time, several types of family can be found in our country.	Nowadays is common finding more than three generation under one roof since many teenagers get pregnant and getting married is becoming old fashion.
	3	Causes of economical changes have been different. Mainly they have to do with economical and social aspects.	They [ <i>women</i> ] prefer starting a career and being economically independent.

Table 6. Absence of hypernew.

This lack of consolidation in the hypernews of these compositions represents an interference in the flow of information that affects communication.

Furthermore, when analyzing hypertheme and hypernew, it was observed that in compositions N° 1, N° 3 and N° 6, five paragraphs had only one complex clause, in

other words, they were made up of just one sentence and, therefore, it was not possible to analyze hypertheme/hypernew because there was not a development of ideas or a summary of them at the end. In this case, the flow of information was affected.

Considering the analysis of theme and rheme, although there was a strong tendency to build up a thematic progression, there were some problems in the flow of information. First, some themes presented new information that had not been introduced in previous clauses. One example is theme 7 in composition N°2:

Theme	Rheme
1. Social changes	have been taken place around the world over the last 50 years.
2. These changes	may include the age at which women and men get married and the size of families.
3. 50 years ago	people who got married were aged between 15 and 20, the woman, and between 18 and 22, the man.
4. People	got married at an early age
5.because it was only necessary that women *	had learned the house chores
6. and men *	had got a permanent job
7. Education	<i>was not considered necessary.</i>

Table 7.Theme containing new information.

Second, it was hard to identify themes at times. One example is the theme “This [these]changes” in composition N°1, whose reference is not clear:

	Theme	Rheme
Paragraph1	1. During our lives	we see many changes
	2. as we *	live in a dynamic society constantly reshaped by different factors
Paragraph 2	1. If <u>we</u> tried to look back on family considerations, size, or the average age of marriage	we would discover the way our society has developed into more complex situations and relations caused by the circumstances of the times we are living in.
Paragraph 3	1. 50 years ago	families consisted of, at least, more than 8 members
	2. and everytime <u>one of them</u> decided to start a new life by getting married or working *	they left parental houses in order to settle as independent people.
	3. Usually, this decision of getting married *	was made at a very early age (women usually at 19 and man at 21)
	4. and it	implied a lot of effort.
Paragraph 4	1. On the other hand, if <u>we</u> did a comparison with our current time *	we would find out quite a difference in this aspects.
	2. Nowadays	families consist of 6 members approximately
	3. and usually more than one generation	lives under the same roof.
	4. As regards to marriage,	the constant necessity to work harder and earn money has caused “the marriage idea” to start fading.

	5. <i>This changes</i> <sup>l</sup>	can be considered as the consequence of several factors: economic, political, social or any of the factors you can think of.
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Table 8. The problem of identifying reference.

Finally, many compositions presented themes with information that was an obstacle in that thematic position. An example is theme 14 in composition N°8:

Theme	Rheme
11. Today	this model has changed
12. and there*	is a distinction between a nuclear family and extended family
13. The first	Is the basic family unit of parents and two or three children
14. <u>Having not many children</u>	is a way to reduce living costs and give them a better quality of life
15. On the other hand, extended families*	is all the other members who are related by blood or marriage

Table 9. Theme that interrupts the flow of information.

To conclude, this research has shown that most compositions had many problems at the level of organization of information. However students attempted to keep a thematic progression as well as a line of development, either through comparison or parallelism in each paragraph of their compositions.



#### **4. Pedagogical implications**

Bearing in mind that there may be some problems with students' writings at this level of analysis, it is important to raise their awareness of these issues. Students can be gradually introduced to the appropriate metalanguage and they can be guided to reflect upon their texts along these lines.

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## **8 Enhancing students' pronunciation skills with the aid of learning strategies**

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### **1. Introduction**

This paper presents some of the findings from a study carried out in order to pursue a research-oriented degree (Licenciatura en Inglés). The research is currently being conducted at Facultad de Filosofía, Humanidades y Artes at UNSJ. The main objective of the research is to find out whether students' acquisition of some features of the English phonological system could be enhanced with the aid of learning strategies.

Learning a second or foreign language may be challenging for some students, especially if the language being learned differs considerably from the learners' L1. Many students struggle trying to acquire a new lexical, grammatical and/or phonological system because such acquisition poses a real challenge on their cognitive abilities. Some students can deal with the challenge of learning a second language (SL) more successfully than others, but if they fail to overcome the initial difficulties involved in the complex process of SL learning, some of them become frustrated and do not enjoy the process of language learning. This situation could be avoided if weaker students were equipped with pedagogical tools which can help them become more proficient language learners and, thus, be ready to face any language-related challenge.

In this research, the attempt was to find ways to help unsuccessful learners improve. I noticed that many of them were having many difficulties in incorporating, in this particular case, the English phonological system, which differs substantially from the Spanish one (Spanish is the students' L1). I particularly focused on three problematic vowel sounds (/æ/ɑ:/ʌ/) for Spanish speakers. In order to equip learners with cognitive tools that could help them acquire these sounds with greater ease, I

followed O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) and Oxford's (2013) directions to enhance students learning abilities through the aid of learning strategies.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

In order to account for one of the possible ways in which learning could take place, I followed Anderson's Information Processing model (1983, 1985) with the aim of gaining a better understanding of such a process. The model is framed within cognitivism since it pays special attention to the role of the mind in the learning process. According to this model, human memory plays a crucial role in the process of storing and learning new information and also it emphasises the fact that regular practice leads to automatisisation. This model helps us explain the complex process of second language learning. It states that humans possess two types of memories: short-term (working) memory and long-term memory. This last memory is, in turn, further sub-divided into two other kinds of memories which Anderson calls declarative (knowledge about things) and procedural (knowledge about how to do things). In general terms, Anderson's model (1983, 1985) shows that incoming information (input) is processed in the working memory. However, in order to be able to process, organise and store the new information, it has to be associated with information that learners already have in their long-term memory so as to build meaningful *bridges* between the old and the new information. Once this complex cognitive process is completed, the new information is ready to be stored permanently in the long-term memory. According to Anderson (1983, 1985), this way of storing information is demanding for learners, but it has the advantage of keeping information stored in a systemic and organised way.

Long-term memory stores two different types of knowledge: declarative and procedural. The first type (declarative) refers to information that we know about something and it is considered static knowledge. The information stored in this memory can be verbalised (declared), but images and temporal sequences can also be kept in this memory. According to Anderson (1985), the information kept in this memory is organised like a hierarchical network made up of cognitive units (nodes) and links among the nodes. Johnson (1997) states that declarative knowledge is stored in memory as a data base organised in semantic schemes and recognises advantages and disadvantages to this type of memory. He adds that since the knowledge stored in the

long-term memory is kept in an organised fashion, it is relatively simple for learners to have access to a particular piece of information. However, gaining access to this information requires conscious attention on the part of the learners, which makes it harder for them if they try to do more than one cognitive-demanding task. As regard the second type of knowledge – procedural – Anderson (1985) claims that it is knowledge about how to do things. He states that sometimes information that used to be kept as declarative can be proceduralised. This means that learners need not pay conscious attention to what they are doing because the knowledge has been automatised. Johnson (1997) also finds advantages and disadvantages to this kind of knowledge. One of the advantages is that once certain knowledge has been automatised, learners can *use* it without even realising they are doing so, which means that they can pay conscious attention to other cognitive tasks. However, Johnson (1997) explains that if some knowledge is proceduralised in an erroneous way, it is difficult for learners to access it, make it conscious again, fix what was wrongly learnt and automatise it again. Summarising, declarative knowledge can be internalised relatively easy, but procedural knowledge is automatised after students have had many instances to practise it and so being able to take it to a subconscious level of usage.

According to this model (Anderson, 1985), the acquisition of skills or any other cognitive faculty takes place following three stages in which declarative knowledge becomes procedural: (1) Cognitive stage: the learning process of new abilities begins in this stage which involves conscious attention on the part of the learners. (2) Associative stage: in this stage, the new (sometimes erroneous) knowledge is associated with already existing information and meaningful links are developed. (3) Autonomous stage: in this stage, the abilities being learnt become more automatised and the mistakes that hinder their correct usage begin to disappear. This automatisation is only possible through constant and varied practice. The benefit of reaching this stage is that no conscious attention is required to perform a task and almost no demand is set on the working memory.

Having discussed the model used to account for the learning process of complex cognitive skills, I will now focus on the way in which pronunciation teaching could be addressed in order to maximise students' opportunities to learn it successfully. Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin (2010) indicate that pronunciation teaching, along the years, has moved from being considered a top priority to a skill that could be learnt by

the learner on his/her own without any explicit reference to it on the part of the teacher. Some of the methods used to teach pronunciation are the following (Celce-Murcia et. al., 2010):

- (1) The Direct Method: it gained popularity in the late 1800s and early 1900s. In this method, pronunciation is taught through imitation and intuition; students imitate a model – the teacher or a recording – and do their best to approximate the model through imitation and repetition.
- (2) The Reform Movement: the first linguistic or analytic contribution to the teaching of pronunciation emerged in the 1890s as part of the Reform Movement in language teaching. This movement was influenced by phoneticians such as Henry Sweet and Paul Passy, among others, who formed the International Phonetic Association and developed the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).
- (3) The 1940s and 1950s: it is believed that the Reform Movement played a role in the development of Audiolingualism in the USA and the Oral Approach in Britain during the 1940s and 1950s. In both methods, pronunciation is very important and it is taught explicitly from the start.
- (4) The 1960s: in the 60s, the Cognitive Approach and cognitive psychology viewed language as a rule-governed behaviour rather than habit formation. It deemphasised pronunciation in favour of grammar and vocabulary.
- (5) The 1970s: the methods that came to attention during the 70s, such as the Silent Way and Community Language Learning (CLL), continued to exhibit interesting differences in the way they dealt with pronunciation. The Silent Way can be characterised by the attention paid to accuracy of pronunciation of both the sounds and structures of the target language from the initial stage of instruction. Secondly, the CLL class also pays close attention to pronunciation from the very beginning, but the techniques used to teach it are different from the ones used in the Silent Way.
- (6) The Communicative Approach: this approach, also called Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), took hold in the 1980s and is currently dominant in language teaching. It states that the primary purpose of language is communication, thus, using language to communicate should be central in all

classroom language instruction. Even when native-like pronunciation is not the main aim in this approach, careful attention to pronunciation teaching is paid in every class through a wide variety of tasks. I would like to conclude this section by making clear that this last approach is the one followed in this research because I believe it helps teachers account more thoroughly for the complex issue of language teaching.

In connection with the use of learning strategies to assist the learner in the execution of cognitive tasks, the taxonomy proposed by O'Malley and Chamot (1999) was adopted in my study because of its simplicity and coherence. However, I also took into account the proposed modifications that Oxford (2013) makes to the taxonomy. These authors take into consideration Anderson's model (1985) and emphasise the role of the student as central in the process of regulating his/her own learning process. These authors define learning strategies as "special ways of processing information that enhance comprehension, learning, or retention of information" (O'Malley et. al., 1999, p.1) and they organise them in three macro groups: metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective. Metacognitive strategies are higher order executive skills that regulate the learning process, that is to say, they allow learners to plan, direct and evaluate that process. In general terms, these strategies are independent from the specific learning tasks. Cognitive strategies, strongly linked to the learning tasks, operate directly on incoming information, manipulating it physically or mentally with the aim of aiding the learning process. They have an operative function and enable the analysis, organisation, elaboration and transformation of information. Socio-affective strategies include a broad group of strategies that involve either interaction with another person or ideational control over affect. Generally, they are considered applicable to a wide variety of tasks. These strategies also have a significant influence in the learning process.

### **3. Methodology**

This is a mix-methods study which uses mostly quantitative tools, but also qualitative, to gather information. As regards the tools used to collect data for quantitative analysis, recorded interviews, evaluation charts, and students' logs were used. On the other hand,

a personal report was provided by the study participants where they supplied a qualitative assessment of the whole experience. The research is a descriptive one and was conducted at Facultad de Filosofía, Humanidades y Artes and at a private English institute. The study participants were a group of students with a B1 (CEFR) level of English who were chosen and assigned randomly to specific groups. There was a control group and an experimental group.

#### **4. Pedagogical intervention**

Goodwin (2001, in Celce-Murcia et. al., 2001) proposes a series of pedagogical steps that could help educators teach pronunciation in an informed and optimal way. In this respect, Kelly (2010) also suggests using these steps when teaching pronunciation. These proposed steps are framed within a communicative framework for teaching pronunciation and are sequenced as follows:

- (1) Description and analysis: in this stage, I presented the phonological feature (/æ/ɑ:/ʌ/) we were going to study by showing when and how it occurs. I made use of vowel charts and presented some general rules for occurrence deductively.
- (2) Listening discrimination: in this section, listening activities that included contextualised minimal pair discrimination exercises were proposed. The students' task was clearly defined and focused on only one or two features at a time.
- (3) Controlled Practice: at the beginning, in more controlled activities, the learners' attention was focused almost completely on form. I made use of poems, rhymes, short dialogues and dramatic monologues to practise the phonological features under study.
- (4) Guided Practice: in guided activities, the students' attention was no longer entirely on form. The learners began to focus on meaning, grammar and communicative intent as well as pronunciation. For example, in this study, I used a number contextualised exchanges in which students had to focus on the message as well as on pronunciation.

- (5) Communicative Practice: in this stage, activities stroke a balance between form and meaning. In this research, debates, interviews, simulations and drama scenes were used. As the activities became gradually more communicative, the learners' attention was still focused on one or two features at a time since it is usually overwhelming for some students to suddenly monitor many pronunciation features at once.
- (6) (Self) evaluation: in this final stage, an evaluation on the part of the students and from the teacher was carried out. The purpose of the evaluation was to measure how much progress the students had made. It consisted on a conversation amongst three students, a peer feedback and a self-reflection on their performance.

Having described the steps followed to teach pronunciation, I will now describe the stages proposed by O'Malley et al. (1999) and revised by Oxford (2013) to instruct students on the optimal and informed use of learning strategies. It was decided to use these stages because I found them easy to teach and follow and because they propose a clearly defined way to carry out the instruction:

- (1) Preparation: this activity took place in the first class (session) and its main objective was to raise awareness on the learners about the existence of learning strategies and relate it to their prior knowledge about strategies. Students were asked to gather in small groups and reflect about the techniques they used to make their learning process more effective.
- (2) Presentation: this phase was linked to the previous one and it was done in the same class. Once the students gave their opinions about the techniques they used to study, I made students notice how important some of these habits were in the process of learning a language. Then, the concept of learning strategies was formally introduced and the benefits and advantages of using such strategies were also highlighted.
- (3) Practice: this stage took place for about 14 weeks. During this period, the training was carried out. The strategies selected and used were those which had proved useful for aiding the acquisition of English phonological features in other studies



(Leáñez, Waasaf, Castro & Leceta, 2012; Waasaf, Leáñez & Nafá, 2001). The selected strategies were the following: metacognitive (selective attention, functional planning and monitoring); cognitive (organization, note taking, repetition), and socio-affective (cooperation, self-talk and interrogation).

- (4) Evaluation: the efficiency of the training was evaluated regularly and problems were solved when necessary. The students, for their part, evaluated their own use of strategies by using a strategy log.
- (5) Expansion and reflection: this stage took place by the end of the training, when the students began to automatise the most useful strategies for each of them. That is, the strategies started to become proceduralised. At the same time, the learners had the chance to start applying the strategies in other contexts, for instance, at school, and also reflect upon the benefits of using learning strategies on a daily basis to enhance their learning practices.

## 5. Results and discussion

In general terms, it was possible to observe that, out of the three macro groups of strategies (metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective) included in the study, the cognitive strategies were the ones that students favoured the most. One possible explanation for this result is that students found the strategies included in this category the most useful ones given the nature of the tasks they were asked to perform. Figure 1 shows the percentages of strategy use by the experimental group (EG) for both tests.

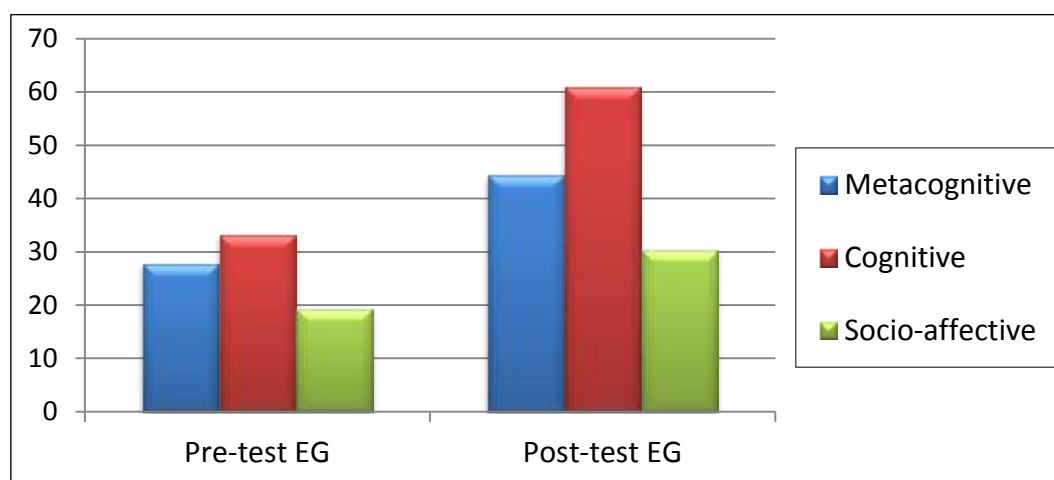


Figure1. Use of learning strategies in pre and post-test by the EG.

It is possible to see from the graph that the students in this group did not use learning strategies regularly before they received the training on their correct and informed use. However, in the post-test, the percentages go up substantially probably due to the positive effect of the training. The control group (CG) showed similar values in the pre-test, but in the post-test, the percentages did not change as in the EG. In fact, the percentage decreased in the post-test. However, the cognitive strategies still surpassed the other two macro groups. Figure 2 shows these results:

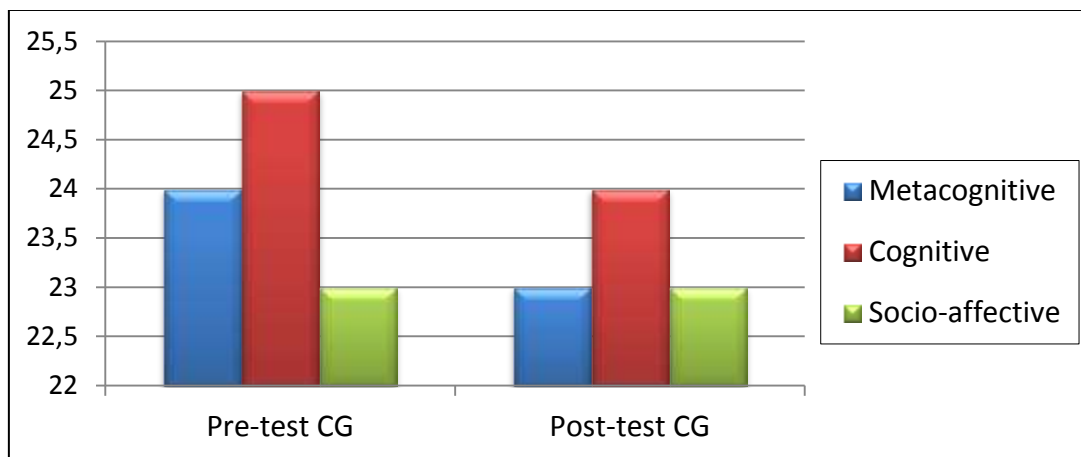


Figure 2. Use of learning strategies in pre and post-test by the CG.

Figure 2 shows that the students in the CG did not increase their percentages of strategy use in the second test. This group was not expected to present the same values as the EG because they did not receive the formal training in strategy use; nevertheless, it was surprising that the percentages of use moved down in the post-test. One possible explanation for this unexpected behaviour could be that the participants were more conscious about the seriousness of the study and they provided more honest answers.

Generally speaking, in the cognitive category of strategies, the strategy of repetition was the one that students chose (85%) the most, followed by organisation and note-taking. As it was said before, the participants might have chosen the strategy of repetition because it was the most appropriate one to accomplish the aim of articulating certain sounds adequately.

With reference to the second macro group of strategies (metacognitive), the strategy of monitoring was the one that students found the second most useful (80%), followed by selective attention and functional planning. The learners claimed that while they were monitoring their performance, they were able to spot mistakes in it and were able to fix them in time.

The socio-affective strategies were the ones that obtained the lowest percentage of use on the part of the students. The strategy of cooperation was the third most used strategy (65%), followed by self-talk and interrogation. The students indicated that the help they sometimes obtained from their peers was of great use to carry out some of the tasks they were asked to do.

Out of the three vowel sounds studied in this research (/æ/ɑ:/ʌ/), the one that students found most difficult to articulate was vowel n° 5 (/ɑ:/), then vowel n° 4 (/æ/) and finally the sound they found less problematic to produce was vowel n° 10 (/ʌ:/) since it is the one whose place of articulation is more similar to Spanish /a/. As it was mentioned before, the students were assigned to two groups. The students in the EG received explicit training on the use of learning strategies, while the ones in the CG did not. This difference was crucial and affected the students' phonological performance, favouring the students in the EG. At the beginning of the research, both groups showed similar levels of competence in their pronunciation. However, after having received the training on learning strategies, the students of the EG began to surpass their peers in the CG and presented better results in the final exam as regards their pronunciation skills. The following tables show these results more clearly.

	<b>Experimental Group</b>					
<i>Tests</i>	<i>Pre-test</i>			<i>Post-test</i>		
<b>Vowel phonemes</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Speaking</b>	<b>Difference in %</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Speaking</b>	<b>Difference in %</b>
/æ/	0,45%	0,22%	0,23%	0,77%	0,72%	0,05%
/ʌ/	0,53%	0,25%	0,28%	0,89%	0,78%	0,11%
/ɑ:/	0,36%	0,33%	0,03%	0,74%	0,71%	0,03%

Table 1. Percentages of correct articulation of phonemes in both tests by EG.

It can be observed from Table 1 that, in the pre-test, the percentages of correct articulations were low, but after the instruction in pronunciation and the training in strategy use the percentages increased, especially in the reading part.

Table 2 is included in order to compare the results of the CG with the ones from the EG.

	<b>Control Group</b>					
<i>Tests</i>	<i>Pre-test</i>			<i>Post-test</i>		
<b>Vowel phonemes</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Speaking</b>	<b>Difference in %</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Speaking</b>	<b>Difference in %</b>
/æ/	0,40%	0,29%	0,11%	0,61%	0,54%	0,07%
/ʌ/	0,54%	0,27%	0,27%	0,75%	0,68%	0,07%
/ɑ:/	0,35%	0,15%	0,20%	0,57%	0,35%	0,22%

Table 2. Percentages of correct articulation of phonemes in both tests by CG.

Table 2 shows that the percentages of both groups were similar, but after the training that only the EG received, the values of accuracy in the post-test were substantially higher in the EG when compared to the ones in the CG. This difference may mean that the participants from the EG were able to performe better than their peers in the CG because of the benefits of the use of strategies. It was possible to arrive at this conclusion because before receiving any kind of training, both groups showed similar degrees of phonological performance. During the research, both groups were exposed to the same pronunciation instruction, but only the EG received strategy training. So, when the results of the post-test were compared, it was noticeable that the EG had performed better than the CG, which did undergo strategy training.

In connection with the qualitative results, participants were asked to provide a personal report where they commented briefly on the experience. About 80% of the students claimed that they benefited from the experience. 90% of the learners said they could transfer the use of strategies to other areas of learning. About 75% of the participants indicated that they were able to see how their learning process was optimised by the informed use of learning strategies. 95% of the students stated that

they would have wanted to continue learning about pronunciation and about strategy use for the rest of the semester. To sum up, most of the participants were able to notice a positive change in the way they approached and conducted their learning process.

## **6. Conclusions**

In this paper, some of the main the results of a research being conducted in pursuit of a research-oriented degree at FFHA were presented. The main objective of the research is to find out whether students could become better ones if they are equipped with some learning strategies which could help them become better and more independent learners.

It was possible to prove that once the students have automatised the use of strategies, they can use them effectively to optimise their learning, while the students who did not receive any training on strategies performed less successfully than their better equipped peers.

I have tried to share this experience in connection with the beneficial use of strategies to enhance students' learning process. I would like to end this discussion by stating that teachers and students alike can benefit from the use of strategies because their correct use may help them make the most of the learning experience.

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## **9 Research instruments for exploring strategy use in the context of an intercomprehension in Germanic Languages (IGL) course**

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### **1. Introduction**

This paper reports on one aspect of a current research project on Intercomprehension in Germanic Languages (IGL) for Spanish-speaking adults at the School of Languages of Cordoba State University. It will focus on the collaborative design of research tools for gathering relevant information about the use of language learning strategies, which students deploy to simultaneously develop reading comprehension skills in English, German and Dutch. The context is an IGL course that will be taught in the second half of 2016 to Spanish speaking adults with some knowledge of English (A1/A2 level in the CEFR), which is used as a bridge language.

### **2. Theoretical framework**

#### **2.1. Key constructs**

The concept of intercomprehension refers to the ability to communicate in languages of the same linguistic family without the need for full mastery of all of them. Degache (2006) defines this phenomenon as a special case of plurilingual-exolingual communication which is characterised by the asymmetry of the interlocutors' linguistic competences and the use of diverse codes in the interaction. Another definition is

provided by Capucho and Oliveira (2005), who see it as “the ability to co-construct meaning in the context of the encounter of different languages and to make pragmatic use of this in a concrete communicative situation” (p. 14). We agree with Möller and Zeevaert (2010) who characterise intercomprehension as “the reading comprehension of texts in languages one has not studied formally through knowledge of other foreign languages of the same linguistic family”. This project aims at developing partial competences, as defined in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages; more specifically, it aims at the development of reading comprehension in Germanic languages (German and Dutch), through the knowledge of English, which acts as a bridge language.

Research on intercomprehension has demonstrated how receptive knowledge of one language can be developed on the basis of knowledge of another language, belonging to the same linguistic family (Stoye, 2000). The European project EuroComGerm (Hufeisen & Marx, 2007), as part of the EuroCom project, focuses on the development of reading comprehension in one or more typologically-related languages, by making learners aware of their existing linguistic capital, which accounts for what they need not learn when embarking on the process.

Intercomprehension is based on a key concept, *transfer*, which is the human ability to apply previous experiences and knowledge into new contexts. Within the framework of intercomprehension this process has also been called “optimised deduction” (Jessner, 2008). It can be operationalised by applying the method called the *Seven Sieves*, a construct which was first developed by Klein and Stegmann (2000) for intercomprehension in the Romance languages. This construct is based on the metaphor of the learner as a gold seeker, looking for gold (i.e. comprehension of unknown languages) by sieving the texts s/he is confronted with through seven different filters. These are seven different inter-linguistic transfer bases that any reader with a knowledge of a linguistically related language can apply in order to read a text intercomprehensively. Those transfer bases are: (1) cognates (internationalisms and pangermanisms); (2) phonetic correspondences; (3) spelling and pronunciation relationships; (4) morphology; (5) function words; (6) morphosyntax, and (7) syntax. The first four bases account for similarities at the lexical level; the last three, at the syntactic level (Hufeisen & Marx, 2014).



An interactive model of reading constitutes another important angle of the theoretical underpinning of this project. Bertele (in Hufeisen & Marx, 2007), who presents one such conceptualisation of reading, describes the product of the reading process as a mental model which results from the interaction between and among the different stages of the bottom-up and the top-down processes involved in reading.

## **2.2. Research into strategy use**

During the last thirty years, research on Language Learning Strategies (LLS) has developed and refined different tools with the purpose of investigating the mental processes at play while learners understand, remember and use a new language. Some of the problems inherent in strategy research are related to the fact that, on the one hand, strategies are not directly observable, since they constitute mental processes which are internal to the learner. On the other hand, the use of strategies varies according to individuals, tasks, learning conditions and time.

Researchers have attempted to refine the instruments designed for exploring LLS and the ways in which such tools are used so as to minimize their limitations. According to White, Schramm and Chamot (2007), there has been an ongoing concern to acknowledge the weaknesses of self-report instruments created and used to access learners' mental processing. In relation to qualitative data collection procedures, studies on LLS carried out in varied contexts have gathered data by means of varied tools such as retrospective interviews, self-report questionnaires, observation, diaries, dialogue journals, e-journals, recollective studies, computer tracking and, verbal reports, in particular, think-aloud protocols. Instruments designed for exploring LLS can provide important insights into strategy research when two or more methods are used in combination, in order to triangulate the data and increase the validity and reliability of the study.

Retrospective interviews were one of the earliest techniques used in LLS. They are still considered valid tools due to their flexibility, which allows the interviewer to obtain clarification and elaboration from learners, thus tapping into unexpected areas of inquiry. Although they seem to have certain limitations, self-report questionnaires are said to be the most frequently used and efficient method for determining learner's

strategies (Chamot, 2004; Cohen, 1998; Oxford, 1996). One such tool was developed by Oxford (1990a) and used in multiple studies worldwide: the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL).

Nonetheless, the potential limitations of self-report questionnaires are threefold. One limitation for the reliable data collection is the possibility that learners may fail to understand or accurately interpret the strategy description in each item of the questionnaire. A second limitation lies in the fact that learners may claim to use strategies that they have not actually employed. The third restriction can be found in the limitations of the learners' memory capacity. In other words, if the self-report questionnaire is of a broad nature, addressing strategy use in general, learners may fail to recall the actual strategies they have deployed in the past. This limitation can be overcome by basing the self-report questionnaire on a particular task that students have recently completed. This is the way one of the instruments has been collaboratively designed for this study.

During the last decades, introspective tools, such as written diaries, logs, and journals, have also gained a place as useful instruments which, complemented by interviews, profiles and questionnaires, can provide valuable insights for research into LLS. Observation and think-aloud protocols have also been used extensively in strategy research projects. According to White et al. (2007), pre-and post-actional think-alouds can provide valuable information on the strategies learners intend to use before a language task and how they assess these strategies after the completion of those tasks.

The means used to carry out research into LLS have mainly considered strategies as relatively stable internal processes inside learners' minds and have paid little attention to the influence of the context; that is, the situated experience of learners. An alternative approach views the use of strategies as the result of learners' cognition and the mediation of certain communities. Burns (1999) advocates collaborative action research as a promising approach for learner strategy research, due to its participatory quality and inclusiveness of researchers and teachers working together with a common research goal.

### **3. Methodology**

For our research programme, three different research instrument types have been developed for tapping into strategy use in the context of an IGL course taught to Spanish speaking adults who can use English as a bridge to the development of reading comprehension abilities in two languages of the same linguistic family, namely German and Dutch. These instruments are: two different self-report questionnaires, an observation checklist and ethnographic field notes; these tools will be described below. The course will be taught in the second half of 2016 and will employ materials specially developed for the purpose.

The materials were developed by members of the research team during the research periods 2012-13 and 2014-15. “Interger. Manual de Intercomprensión en Lenguas Germánicas para Hispanohablantes” (Lauría de Gentile, Merzig, Trovarelli, Van Muylem & Wilke, 2016) constitutes the first coursebook of its type in Latin America.

The process of developing those materials was based on principles of materials design grounded on the latest results of research into Second Language Acquisition. The criteria for text selection and elaboration employed and the types of tasks designed within a pre-, while- and post- reading framework are also based on the latest research on reading comprehension and intercomprehension (Lauría de Gentile, 2013).

The design of research instruments to explore the strategies employed by readers in the IGL course is based on the hypothesis that the mental process learners go through can be inferred or presupposed by their behavior. Three different instrument types have been designed to elicit information on the subjects’ reading strategies. The first is a self-report questionnaire, of which there are two versions: one will be administered on completion of particular self-assessment tasks included in the materials and the other one will be given to learners after the course has finished. The latter will collect information as to the learners’ beliefs on their perceptions as regards performance and strategy use. Although the gathering and processing of data through such instruments is less demanding or labor-intensive, their design implies a meticulous selection of items to include in questions, and requires piloting and revising questions before they are actually used to collect data.

The second instrument, which is currently being designed and which will be piloted during the first two classes of the IGL course, is an observation checklist. This tool is one of the different procedures that can be used to collect information on students' actual performance in class. According to Richards and Farrell (2011), *seating charts* can be used to code the number of times students interact or participate with other students or with the teacher. Another instrument for observation is the *field notes*, which consist of briefly describing in note form key events that occur throughout the lesson and can work similarly to an ethnographic narrative. A *narrative summary*, on the other hand, is a written summary of the lesson that tries to capture the main things that happened during its course. Finally, a *checklist* is a form of observation system which allows observers to code the data and it contains a list of different features of a lesson, which the researcher will complete while observing it.

In our study, the observation checklist contains three columns. The first one refers to each stage of the IGL lesson, following the pattern that each unit of the book displays. The second one contains several instances of possible observable behaviours that students may show and which may serve as possible evidence of the use of cognitive, meta-cognitive and socio-affective strategies. The third column provides space for comments that the observer may make regarding observable behaviour not accounted for in the first two columns. This instrument will be used every class by two independent observers who will collect data related to two different students each. In other words four students' behaviour will be the focus of observation every class.

There is a third research tool that has been thought out by members of the research team in our monthly meetings. It is an instrument that will consist of ethnographic field notes. This will entail writing down every occurrence in the class, from what is said by teacher and students to what gets done throughout the lesson. This data collection procedure will be employed by a third observer every IGL class, with the intention of triangulating the data obtained this way with the information on strategy use gathered by the application of the observation checklist described in the preceding paragraphs.

#### **4. Expected results and concluding thoughts**

Strategy use is in most cases unobservable and this poses difficulties for the researcher interested in exploring language learning strategies (LLS) used during the process of reading. One of the aims of the present study is to overcome such limitation by employing varied methods. In this way, we will be able to triangulate data obtained through the application of the different tools and thus obtain reliable information on strategy use in the context of an IGL course.

In our current research project, it turned out to be quite a challenge to design the research tools that will be employed to collect data on learners' use of reading strategies in German and Dutch through English. The research team not only had to decide which instruments could be more effective in terms of gathering reliable and useful information, but also take into account how to select the subjects to be observed in every class and what to do if a particular subject misses a class. After various group meetings, the team have finally agreed on the use of two different self-report questionnaires, an observation checklist and ethnographic field notes, which were considered to be particularly suitable to get an insight into the use of strategies in the context mentioned.

The use of four different data collection procedures will enable us to triangulate information gathered by self report questionnaires on learners' beliefs on their use of strategies and data obtained by observing and describing visible learners' behaviour. This will allow for the elaboration of a taxonomy of strategies deployed by Spanish speaking students with a knowledge of English in the context of an IGL course, in which English serves as a bridge language.

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## **10 Engineering in English: An interdisciplinary CLIL project at UNLPam**

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### **1. Introduction**

At the time of writing, an engineer based in a small town in La Pampa is monitoring the speed of a truck in the USA; another one is having a job interview online, and an undergraduate student is taking classes in a university abroad. They are interacting through Skype and chat, brainstorming ideas in video conferences, travelling to other countries or taking an exam. English is the language they are using to communicate. Mehisto, Marsh and Frigols (2008) state that “[g]lobalization has made the world interconnected in ways not seen before. [...] and this is having an impact on languages” (p.10). Engineering professionals and students are part of that interconnected world in which they need to master a foreign language, English in particular, to interact both in the academic and professional world. Thus, learning English becomes a priority in students’ academic training programme as it will allow them to continue with postgraduate studies and have better job opportunities.

Nevertheless, the amount of time devoted to the learning of the foreign language is scarce and restricted to the beginning years of the students’ university studies. In an attempt to ameliorate this situation, we have developed interdisciplinary experiences in engineering subjects using Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL).

The aim of this paper is to describe the context where these interventions are carried out, to explain some theoretical issues involved and to share the experiences developed so far.

## 2. Context

Students at the School of Engineering at La Pampa National University (UNLPam) need English to read subject-specific texts, attend classes in universities abroad through the international mobility programme and take courses at the Balseiro Institute during the last semester of the electromechanical degree programme.

The profile of the engineering graduate, as posted on the [university website](#) indicates that the new professionals should be able, among other skills, to adapt to technological changes. For that reason, they need to read material only available in English. Daphne van Weijen (2012) indicates that approximately 80% of all the journals that appear in Scopus are in English. She also states that English is the preferred language of publications in the so-called hard sciences.

UNLPam's strategic plan advocates internationalisation through students' and teachers' mobility programmes to promote national and international cooperation and to broaden academic horizons (Baudino, 2015). As an example, our students have been taking courses in UFRGS (Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul) in Brazil and in most cases, English is the preferred language to take exams and communicate with peers.

The Electromechanical Engineering major has an elective orientation, Industrial Automation, which is taught at the Balseiro Institute, one of the most prestigious research centers in Latin America. Students who choose this specialisation are required to read most of the bibliography in English and even attend lectures in the second language.

Upon graduation, UNLPam alumni usually interact in the target language in both their jobs and in academic environments if they decide to pursue postgraduate courses overseas. They work in places such as meat packing plants, technology based companies or research institutes where they use English on a daily basis. Those who go into the academic profession not infrequently travel abroad to make presentations of their projects or to focus on their career development.

However, students at UNLPam have only two compulsory levels of English of 90 semester hours each in the first two years of their major. These have proven to be insufficient to meet the linguistic demands they face. During that time, they attend foundational courses such as Algebra and Mathematical Analysis. Hence it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to work with authentic material related to the different majors in those two levels.

It is important to add that in many cases, students who come to this university do not have the basic level necessary to take the first English course. That is why there are two English elective courses: a preliminary one to prepare them for the first level and a subsequent one for those students interested in developing language skills further. Students usually attend the English courses in the first two years and from that moment on they lose contact with the language. And it is precisely then when they start taking specific subjects of their major.

It is in this context where the project *Interdisciplinary Interventions* is implemented in specific subjects of the engineering majors using CLIL. Students learn specific concepts of their areas while improving their language ability in subjects of their interest and relevant to their lives. According to Coyle, Hood and Marsh (2010), “[s]uccessful language learning can be achieved when people have the opportunity to receive instruction, and at the same time experience real-life situations in which they can acquire the language more naturalistically” (p.11). In the experiences, students read, write, listen and talk in English in areas of their specialty.

### **3. Theoretical framework**

Coined and developed in Europe, CLIL has now spread all over the world and research shows that it has expanded all over Argentina’s private and public educational institutions at all levels (Banegas, 2011).

At UNLPam, CLIL comes on the scene as the proper solution for the context described above since it combines a second language and specific subject, that is to say, students learn a discipline through a foreign language and learn a language through a specific discipline. As Coyle et al. (2010) state, “Content and Language Integrated Learning is a dual focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language” (p. 1). Language and content are hence interlaced without supremacy of one over the other. Mehisto et al. (2008) refer to the integration of both areas: “[l]anguage learning is included in content classes” and “[c]ontent from subjects is used in language-learning classes” (p. 11). So when we say *Engineering in English* in the title of our paper, what we actually mean is Engineering *and* English. Coyle et al. (2010) perfectly describe it when they state that it is “neither language learning nor subject learning, but an amalgam of both” (p. 4). In this regard, the document published by the Eurydice European Unit indicates in its

introduction that “the non-language subject is not taught *in* a foreign language but *with* and *through* a foreign language” (p. 7).

We first conceived the idea of implementing CLIL during a seminar in La Pampa that advocated its inclusion in secondary education. CLIL emerged as the approach that best fitted our needs. Ours is an interdisciplinary project in which language and content teachers collaborate and share their expertise to create learning experiences in both content and language. These take place in courses such as *Engineering Materials*, *Mechanical Technology*, *Distributed Systems* and *Industrial Organisation*. Students work with tasks such as reading texts to make a presentation or watching videos to understand a concept. Teachers from both areas thus work together to create “a learning environment which is linguistically accessible whilst being cognitively demanding - one in which progression in both language and content learning develops systematically” (Coyle et al., 2010, p. 67). Hence, cooperation becomes a key factor in the implementation of CLIL (Mehisto et al., 2008). We also share the authors’ views as regards the other core features of this methodology: “multiple focus, safe and enriching learning environment, authenticity, active learning and scaffolding” (pp. 29-30).

In our classes, we incorporate language learning in engineering subjects thus fostering cross-curricular activities. Higher Education policies from Argentina’s Ministry of Education state that contents should be integrated horizontally and vertically and there should be instruments for integration among professors in what they call *Common Educational Experiences*. UNLPam Engineering School advocates such practices and the Directive Council published a resolution regulating them (Council Resolution 50/2016).

The use of authentic material is a major issue since it contributes to creating a meaningful environment where students gain confidence and develop language awareness. Students work with topics that are part of the course description of the content area and it is that familiarity with the theme what motivates them and generates a positive attitude towards the tasks.

According to Coyle et al.’s (2010) classification of CLIL models in higher education, ours belongs to Model C2, one in which “language teaching runs parallel to content teaching with specific focus on developing the knowledge and skills to use the language so as to achieve higher-order thinking” (p.25).

#### **4. Experiences**

We have been developing interdisciplinary activities for three years now in four courses of the last years of the engineering degree programmes. For illustrative purposes, we will refer to one of the experiences carried out in the Engineering Materials course during the first semester of 2016. For two weeks we worked collaboratively with the professor of the content subject. Students read a variety of authentic texts in English from scientific magazines and journals on topics such as cold spray repairs in aerospace, thermal spray coatings for nuclear plants, materials testing systems, design of space materials to withstand cosmic dust and mechanical testing of automotive composites. With information from such topics, they had to prepare an oral presentation using visuals. The text of the presentation had to be in English, and as regards the oral presentation, they were given the choice of delivering it in English or Spanish.

Below is a description of the activities carried out in three 90-minute classes and a two-hour class:

##### **Day 1**

- Engineering Materials professor assigns texts to groups of students.
- Language teachers introduce the class with a PowerPoint presentation that describes the interdisciplinary activity, the goal of the task, reading strategies they can use when reading texts and web pages they may access such as online dictionaries (English-English and English-Spanish) and scientific websites.
- Students work with the texts, discuss in groups and ask questions to either the language or the content teachers depending on the nature of the questions.

##### **Days 2 and 3**

- Students continue working with the texts; they try to solve problems with the help of the teachers, their peers and online websites.
- Language teachers give tips to write the PowerPoint/Prezi presentation.
- Students prepare presentations on their computers.

##### **Day 4**

- Students make their presentations in groups.

Regarding language, all the classes were delivered in English. Most of the students have already attended the compulsory English levels in previous years and are accustomed to using the target language at all times. So, when they did not know a

word, they used classroom language like *How do you say...?* or *What's the meaning of...?* Students usually appeal to text graphics, tables, photographs and subtitles to understand concepts. It is important to highlight that the professor has a very good command of English since he completed his PhD in the USA. Consequently, he actively participated in the activities responding to content questions in the target language thus creating an atmosphere favourable for language learning.

As regards content, the students worked with open-ended engineering problems, i.e., those real or hypothetical situations whose solution requires knowledge of basic science and technology. According to the National Commission for University Evaluation and Accreditation (CONEAU) of Argentina, engineering students are required to have a certain amount of hours for open-ended problems as the basis for developing projects and designs (CONEAU Resolution 1232/01 p. 16). And, in the words of the professor, “the world of content that’s out there is enormous, so if they do the task in English, the benefit will double.”

The interventions represented consciousness raising activities as to the needs of English as a means to access new knowledge. Students are dealing with real engineering problems related to the topics of the Engineering Materials syllabus. Examples include testing new materials using efficient testing systems, simulating conditions found in space to specify which materials should be used on the outside of space vehicles and repairing spacecrafts using cold spray, to name a few.

This way, the interdisciplinary activities are not only training students in specific areas of the subject but they are also contributing to the students’ personal and professional development giving the subject a new perspective and fostering a positive attitude. English thus has immediate utility and is not merely a tool to be used in the future.

The experiences turned out to be truly motivational as observed by the students’ enthusiasm and participation. At the end of the activity, we asked students to report their perceptions in a short questionnaire. The most recurrent themes were: learning through integration, task usefulness, difficulties encountered, and the need for new interventions. The following excerpts illustrate such themes:

Me resultó útil porque además de adquirir nuevos conocimientos, veo como se relaciona todo lo aprendido con cosas que no sabía. [It was useful because I acquired new information and connected everything I learned with things I did not know.]

Aprendemos más inglés y aprendemos a desenvolvernos en las materias de ingeniería

en otro idioma. [We are learning more English and how to deal with engineering subjects in another language.]

Resulta muy útil ya que en un futuro tendré que leer algún manual o alguna publicación y no siempre va a estar en español. [It is very useful because in the future I will have to read manuals or publications and they will not always be available in Spanish.]

El inglés es el idioma con que nos vamos encontrar cuando queramos hacer algún proyecto o cuando hagamos contacto con otros países. [English is the language we will use to develop projects and to make contacts with other countries.]

Las dificultades fueron principalmente las palabras técnicas pero viendo el contexto y consultando a los profesores se pudo resolver. [Technical words were the main difficulty that could be solved through the context and the teachers' help.]

Las dificultades de comprensión las pude resolver gracias a los profesores, los diccionarios y los compañeros con mayor conocimiento de inglés. [I could solve comprehension difficulties with the help of teachers, dictionaries and classmates with a higher level of English.]

Deberíamos tener experiencias similares en otras materias. [We should have similar experiences in other subjects.]

Sin duda, la mayoría de las materias deberían tener experiencias similares. Es una nueva herramienta para mejorar nuestro desempeño. [Undoubtedly, most subjects should include similar experiences. It's a new tool to improve our performance.]

As for limitations, it must be said that only a few teachers with a good command of English have been interested in participating in the experiences. Those are the ones who have done postgraduate studies overseas and usually write articles and make presentations in English. Another constraint was the fact that a few students had not

taken all the compulsory English courses. They stated that it was really difficult not only to work with those texts but also to keep pace with a class conducted in English.

It might be thought that language teachers could feel apprehensive about dealing with specialised subjects. Our role is not to teach engineering concepts but to help students use language to learn and learn to use language (Coyle et al., 2010). However, the interventions demand a lot of preparation on the part of the language teachers who need to work with text organisation, meaning and pronunciation of specific vocabulary and identify possible language problems. Preparation also implies meetings with the content teacher to organise tasks and clarify concepts thus creating an environment of collaboration. Admittedly, there is an extra effort on the part of the teachers, but it usually results in reward: students surprise us with their expertise on the subject matter. In the classes, it is striking to see how students, when confronting difficulties, turn to content teachers or language teachers according to the nature of the question. For example, the comprehension of a noun phrase such as *a wide range of static and dynamic materials testing machines* is a typical question for language teachers, whereas the difference between *low cycle* and *high cycle fatigue tests* is a question for the Engineering Materials teacher.

## **5. Conclusion**

According to Camilloni (2001) a university graduate should be able to act effectively in the society of the new century and, as preparers of future engineers, we must appropriately respond to these demands. Similarly, Kehm (1995) discusses “the university of the future” (p. 140). The author explains that students will find out that the best education will take place in more than one country; that is why learning English becomes necessary since it is the language used by the scientific community to spread their work.

CLIL gives us the opportunity to prepare today’s graduates and tomorrow’s professionals and to build an environment favourable to the second language. If we consider that CLIL offers many variations, ours would be “the product of practitioners exploring their own practices” (Banegas, 2011, p. 40).

The experiences turned out to be enriching for students as well as for teachers. For us, language teachers, being in contact with older and more mature students, conscious of the need of English, enabled us to draw closer to the student and graduate profile the university needs.



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## **11 A genre- based proposal to help tourism students writing in English**

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### **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to present the design of a writing project being implemented to support fourth year students in the Tourism career at Universidad Nacional de San Juan to write Tourism reports in English more effectively by means of face-to-face and online interaction. The Scaffolding Literacy in Academic and tertiary Environments (SLATE) project (Dreyfus, Humphrey, Mahboob & Martin, 2016) provided the background and tools to implement our project in a novel context.

Students need to participate in contexts where they are allowed to contribute to the evolution of knowledge by transforming what they have learned or challenging current practices and developing new ways of using language in specialised contexts. (Schleppegrell & Colombi, 2008). To be prepared for this, advanced literacy skills are required. According to Schleppegrell and Colombi (2008, p. 1), “advanced literacy refers to the kind of meaning-making that is typical of secondary and postsecondary schooling, and that is also required for participation in many of the professional, technical, bureaucratic and social institutions of our world.” Literacy should be considered a process of construction of meanings that evolve continuously in a society and in the individual. It is a means of social action where both language and context co-participate in construing meanings.

This concept has implications for pedagogical practices since, through control of advanced literacy skills, students may become involved in areas of their interest by supporting or resisting the current social order (Schleppegrell & Colombi, 2008). Also a pedagogical focus that develops advanced literacy makes explicit what needs to be

taught and learned because it emphasises the importance of explicit instruction of academic practices valued by discourse communities in culturally appropriate contexts for teacher- student interaction.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

Advanced literacy points out the group of notions and strategies required to participate in the discursive culture of the disciplines, as well as the activities of reading and writing necessary to learn at university (Carlino, 2005). As reported by this author, the ways of reading and writing differ according to the field of study and they can only be learned within the framework of each discipline because the disciplines are conceptual, rhetorical and discursive fields in themselves. The type of texts, the topics, the purposes, the recipients and the contexts vary in each discipline and students need to learn about them. Taking this into account, we consider that Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is the most adequate linguistic framework to analyze language in context because it conceives language as functional with respect to its meaning potential and the interpretations of the texts, system and elements of the linguistic structures (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Within a functional view, a language is interpreted as a system of meanings accompanied by the ways through which these meanings can be realised. SFL proposes a way to identify the grammatical features that make a particular text the type it is, i.e. the relation of the linguistic options and the situational contexts in which they are used can be explained in functional terms. It provides the tools to analyse the ways in which language builds social and cultural contexts showing how a text means through the grammatical and lexical choices that realise them.

SFL interprets the context of culture through the notion of *genre*. Genres are staged activities with a purpose which are functional to reach cultural purposes (Martin & Rose, 2008). Each culture has genres which are realised through the variables of *register*, recognized as significant and appropriate to reach social purposes. The explicit teaching of the features of higher education genres can give students control over the most relevant discourses of science and society, and this can be achievable through Genre- based pedagogy.

Genre- based pedagogy (Christie & Martin, 1997; Dreyfus et al., 2016; Martin & Rose, 2008; Rothery, 1996) adopts an explicit approach to literacy with the purpose of providing equal opportunities to all students to read and write the genres that allow them to participate actively in science, technology and other social institutions. To achieve

such a goal it is vital to be explicit in the ways a language works to make meaning, engaging students and teachers in their roles, putting emphasis on the content, structure and sequence of the students' stages to become literate in an educational or professional context. This pedagogy focuses on the role of genre in the social construction of experience, which suggests that the educational processes are essential for the construction of relevant social positioning in technical and professional contexts. Some of the benefits of genre pedagogy are that it is explicit, systematic, needs-based, supportive, empowering, critical and consciousness-raising (Hyland, 2004).

The SLATE project<sup>1</sup> (Dreyfus et al., 2016), which is the basis of our proposal, provided online genre-based embedded language and literacy support for students at a Hong Kong university to help them develop their proficiency in academic English. As described by the project designers, the Teaching Learning Cycle (TLC) (Rothery, 1996) was adopted. It consists of three steps, namely the *deconstruction* of a sample text of the genre at issue, the *joint construction* of a new text and the *independent construction* of an instance of the target text. The first step, *deconstruction*, involves questioning the students about their prior knowledge of the genre at issue so as to take into account their starting point in relation to the genre and the disciplinary knowledge. It also implies analyzing the structure and linguistic features of the target genre. At this stage, building field knowledge, i.e. knowledge about the theme students will write about, is vital. This is achieved by providing students with a range of authentic texts to read and by resorting to the knowledge built in other subjects of the career. The second step, *joint construction*, consists of generating a new text in collaboration with an expert writer, in this case the teacher, who provides step-by-step guidance on the three metafunctions (ideational, interpersonal and textual). Finally, the *negotiated independent construction* step involves students producing a novel text considering the features of the target genre already analyzed, and the teachers providing iterative cycles of asynchronous feedback to help students improve their texts.

With this purpose in mind, we find the 3x3 toolbox (Humphrey, Martin, Dreyfus & Mahboob, 2010) used by the SLATE project designers very useful. This toolkit is called 3x3 because it forms a nine-square matrix. Features at three different levels of language (genre and register –whole text-, discourse semantic –phase/paragraph-, and lexicogrammar –clause, group and word-) intersect with features of language from each of the three metafunctions (ideational, interpersonal and textual). This tool makes visible

the metafunctional organisation of language but simplifies SFL's model of stratification and rank as three levels of text.

The type of feedback provided during the *independent construction* of the text and reconstruction was adapted from Dreyfus et al. (2016) who describe three stages of feedback: *feedback preview* (greeting the student, making a positive comment and outlining the focus of the feedback provided), *feedback* (identifying specific issues) and *feedback review* (providing a brief recap of the support given and encouraging comments). For the *feedback* stage, an adaptation of Ellis (2009) corrective feedback strategies was adopted. The strategies that were favoured were metalinguistic corrective feedback and direct corrective feedback. The first consists of giving the students metalinguistic clues by using error codes or by providing brief grammatical descriptions to help them understand the nature of the problem. The second strategy involves the teacher giving the correct form.

### **3. Our project**

The Tourism course at Universidad Nacional de San Juan is organised into three years of study to get the “Técnico Universitario en Turismo” degree, and, after the fifth year of the course plus a thesis work, students get the “Licenciado en Turismo” degree. This course gives English a central role as it consists of five levels of English distributed through the curriculum. Each level is organised annually into a compulsory subject with two classes a week that last one hour and thirty minutes each. It is assumed that our fourth year students have an intermediate level of English for Tourism (A2/B1 level in the Common European Framework of Reference), i.e. they have an acceptable command of spoken and written Tourism genres necessary to interact in service encounters and discipline specific situations in English. The goal of the English IV subject is to provide students with the necessary generic and linguistic knowledge to help them participate in academic and professional contexts (B1/B2 level in the Common European Framework of Reference). They are expected to acquire the linguistic knowledge to understand and produce discipline explanations, tourism reports, e-mails and memos, as well as the linguistic tools to participate in business meetings and presentations, interacting with peers.

In order to support our students in achieving such ambitious goals, we designed and implemented a face-to-face and online writing project embedded in the English IV subject to assist them in their productions of Tourism reports in English. We adopted a

blended model of instruction (face-to-face and online) not only because the advantages of online support have been widely acknowledged (Bliuc, Goodyear & Piggott, 2011; Daymont, Blau & Campbell, 2011), but also because students needed individual guidance, and in order to do this in an effective way without taking up the time from face-to-face classes, online asynchronous support was required. The face-to-face phase of this project was carried out at the faculty, twice a week. The online phase was carried out by using a free website called Kaizena. In this website participants can add different kind of comments (written, voice, lessons, links) which promote teacher/student interaction. As regards the genre chosen, the report is one of the most typical and frequent genres tourism professionals need to understand and produce in their academic and professional contexts. Depending on the themes discussed in Tourism reports, the generic structure of texts may be realised as an *explanation*, to explain tourism phenomena (Phenomenon ^ Factors ^ Conclusion), or as an *experiment report*, to report on the findings of analysis (General description (background/ Purpose) ^ Methods ^ Results ^ Conclusion/ Recommendations).

### **3.1. Pedagogic intervention**

During the *deconstruction stage* three samples of Tourism reports were analyzed using the 3x3 toolkit proposed by the designers of the SLATE project at whole text, phase and sentence/ clause levels. Also, students were guided to access online information about the topics that were being discussed in order to build field knowledge about them. The *deconstruction* process was discussed face-to-face and online.

In the *joint construction stage* students were asked to write a report in small groups. This task was taken from a sample past paper of Pearson LCCI WEFT 2<sup>2</sup> exam. This stage was carried out face-to-face and students worked with the full support of the teachers.

In the *independent construction stage* students wrote a report alone. The task was designed by the teachers; the topic was related to the thematic content that was under treatment. The format was similar to that in Pearson LCCI WEFT 2 exams. A 3x3 matrix adapted from Dreyfus et al. (2016) as shown in the appendix, with probe questions to guide the analysis of texts given to the students before writing a support document. Students uploaded their texts to the online platform Kaizena and feedback in its three phases was provided by the teacher as described by Dreyfus et al. (2016). In the *feedback preview* the teacher greeted the student, made a positive comment and outlined

the focus of the feedback, this instance of feedback was made by means of an audio file. In the *feedback* phase, specific issues were identified. The first comments were about whole text aspects such as organisation and content; if necessary students were redirected to the 3x3 toolkit as a reference. Then, the teacher highlighted the language mistakes in the text and gave metalinguistic clues to help the students understand the nature of the problem. This corrective feedback took the form of written comments which consisted in an error code or a brief grammatical explanation.

Finally, in the *feedback review* the teacher provided a brief recap of the support given and made an encouraging comment. If students had any doubts about the comments made by the teacher they could respond to those comments in the same platform by means of written messages or audio files, generating in this way a dialogical interaction. Students reviewed the text and wrote a new version of it. The three phases of feedback were repeated until the text achieved the requirements of the 3x3 toolkit. In the case that in the final version of the text there were some minor language mistakes, the teacher gave direct corrective feedback.

#### **4. Final comments**

Based on the analysis of the production of students uploaded to Kaizena using the methodology and tools described above, the adaptation of the SLATE project to the context of Tourism students at UNSJ proved to be useful. It allowed us to work with students with limited English language proficiency through scaffolding into a more Tourism- specific understanding of English. They had the chance to read and write discipline texts and familiarise with the linguistic resources used in such genres.

We can conclude that genre-based literacy pedagogy helped them become aware and gradually gain control over the studied genres they need to succeed in their professional life. Using a top-down approach to teaching and feedback proved to be efficient and encouraging to students since they were able to improve their texts at clause/sentence level considering their effect at phase and whole text levels.

In the deconstruction, joint construction and independent construction stages, we used a range of tasks and activities as well as support documents based on the nature and themes of tourism reports. However, they can vary depending on the genre and the group of students.

The use of an online platform helped students to be more in control of their own learning. However, it is important to highlight that the use of technology in education

should be subordinated to a methodological framework and not the other way about. In this case, genre-based pedagogy was the basis for the design of the online intervention. The revisions made by students after feedback showed that they were committed to the process, even though it didn't result in error free language. However, students' final versions evidenced a clear organisation of texts which resulted in acceptable samples of their discipline genre.

## Notes

1. The SLATE project developed a pedagogy of empowerment incorporating aspects of the genre theory (Martin and Rose, 2008), sociology of education (Bernstein, 2000) and socio- cultural theory (Vygostky, 1978). It is a large action research project which was based at the City University of Hong Kong with the aim of helping non-English-speaking students develop their proficiency in academic English. Previous projects such as Language and Social Power, Write it Right and Reading to learn projects (Rose and Martin, 2012) identified the literacy practices necessary to succeed in high school and made explicit the language resources needed to enact these practices.
2. Pearson LCCI qualifications are work-related qualifications, created to give professional learners the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in the workplace. The LCCI International Qualifications in Written English for Tourism (WEFT) are aimed at learners working or intending to work in hospitality, travel and tourism who want to communicate effectively in written English at a customer liaison or professional and supervisory level.

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# APPENDIX

Metafunction	Whole texts- Social activity:	Phase- Discourse semantics	Clause/ sentence- grammar and expressions
Field	Do the stages build knowledge relevant to the topics and purposes?	Is information developed across phases (e.g. general/specific, point/elaboration, evidence/interpretation, claim/evaluation)?	Do noun groups effectively describe and classify specialized terms?
Tenor	Does the text amplify, justify, reinforce, acknowledge experts in the field, etc.?	Does the writer develop points and guide the reader towards a preferred position?	Are phrases like “it is clear that” or “there is a need for” rather than “I think” or “you should” used to negotiate opinions and recommendations?
Mode	Is the content of the text outlined in introduction and summarized in the conclusion?	Does the information flow from topic sentences to expanded concrete terms in subsequent sentences?	Is nominalization used to express processes and nouns rather than verbs?

(Adapted from table 8.4, Dreyfus et al., 2016, pp. 219)

## **12 Intercultural citizenship education in the English language classroom in higher education: Does it lead to language learning?**

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### **1. Introduction**

This paper reports a bilateral university project in the foreign language classroom designed to promote intercultural competence, language development and active and responsible citizenship through content-language integrated learning (CLIL). The rationale for broadening the scope of language courses and combining them with intercultural citizenship or human rights education rests on the idea that language teaching has instrumental (linguistic-oriented and communicative) purposes as well as educational purposes (development of critical thinking skills, development of the self and of the citizenship dimension) (Byram, 2014). Pedagogic proposals (Porto, 2015) and empirical studies reporting on classroom practice are recently available (Byram, Golubeva, Han & Wagner, 2016; Porto, 2014; Porto & Byram, 2015b). These studies have connected both types of education (language and citizenship/human rights) and have demonstrated growth in self/intercultural awareness, criticality and social justice responsibility, as well as the emergence of a sense of community among students during the projects. However, the concern remains as to whether this combination leads to language learning and this article addresses this issue.

The paper describes one transnational intercultural citizenship project carried out in 2013 during a fourth-month period in the foreign language classroom in Argentina and the

UK, designed as a case study, and the research question is ‘Does an intercultural citizenship project lead to language learning?’ The analysis focuses on data produced by the Argentinian students. The project was located in Higher Education in Argentina, where 76 students were learning English, and in Britain, where 23 students were learning Spanish. It focused on human rights violations during the football World Cup that took place in Argentina in 1978 during a period of military dictatorship. In its four stages (introductory, awareness-raising, dialogue, and citizenship), the project involved students researching about the topic, working collaboratively to design posters to raise awareness of human rights violations and acting on their communities. Conversational and documentary data were analysed qualitatively and comprise recorded Skype conversations, chats in a wiki and Facebook, class discussions, reflection logs and the *Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters* (Byram, Barrett, Ipgrave, Jackson, & Méndez García, 2009). Findings show that students found the project motivating, developed critical language awareness, widened their vocabularies and developed plurilingual practices within a translingual orientation.

## **2. The intercultural citizenship project: The football World Cup 1978 and the military dictatorship in Argentina**

This project addressed the topic of the football World Cup in Argentina in 1978 in the midst of a military dictatorship (1976-1983). It took place between September and December 2013. In Argentina, there were 76 second-year undergraduates studying English at a national university. In Britain, there were 23 students, first-year undergraduates taking a Spanish Honours language degree. All students had level B2/C1 in the *Common European Framework of Reference* and were 18-22 years old.

The language courses in both countries, traditionally taught with a linguistic orientation, had recently introduced the intercultural citizenship component as a course requirement in telcollaboration projects that began in 2012 (Porto, 2014). The basis is that a citizenship and human rights education framework in language teaching presents students with issues of social justice and democracy anywhere in the world (Osler 2015; Starkey, 2015). The topic was clearly relevant for the Argentinian students, and equally so for the British students, because it became a springboard for analysis and reflection on the universality of human rights violations.

The project had four stages (described in Porto & Byram, 2015b): introductory, awareness-raising, dialogue, and citizenship. In the introductory stage, the students researched about the dictatorship and the World Cup in their foreign language classrooms, using a variety of sources in English and Spanish (documentaries, interviews, videos, magazines, newspapers, websites, songs, films, etc.).

In the awareness-raising stage, they analysed the media representations of the dictatorship and the World Cup at the time, and reflected on their attitudes, prejudice and feelings toward the historical period and the people involved (dictators, football players, the citizenry, etc.). They thought of other sports events in the world which had been used to mask military, political or other issues and chose one for further research.

In the dialogue stage, the online intercultural exchange began using Skype, Facebook, email and a wiki with the aim of designing a collaborative leaflet or poster in English and Spanish intended to raise the awareness of people today about human rights violations during the World Cup in 1978. The students worked in small groups of mixed nationalities and recorded their Skype conversations.

Finally, the citizenship stage involved only the Argentinian students due to institutional constraints at the British university. They designed and carried out a civic action with an impact on their local communities. For instance, one group talked to family and friends and interviewed a neighbour; another one gave a talk at the local School of Medicine; others travelled 100 km to a teacher training college and worked with student teachers on how to teach this historical period to primary school children; and another group travelled to the city of Lincoln (500 km away) to interview a 95-year-old man whose son had disappeared.

### **3. Language education and intercultural citizenship education in combination**

The point initially put forward by Byram (2008) is about the educational purpose of language teaching and how this can be more fully developed, problematising its instrumental focus. He argued that a combination of language teaching and citizenship education has an educationally significant potential (Byram, 2008, 2014; Byram et al., 2016; Porto & Byram, 2015a). The proposal is to integrate intercultural communicative competence (from foreign language education) and civic action in the community (from citizenship education). In this view, language activity when combined with a citizenship

dimension reaches the public sphere by transcending the boundaries of the classroom and the school/university. Furthermore, citizenship becomes the content of foreign language teaching and this introduces into the language classroom the approach to CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) (Cenoz, 2015).

Intercultural citizenship can be developed in any language course when : a) learners from different countries, regions or communities work in a collaborative project and develop a sense of bonding; b) students engage their critical thinking skills at levels involving not only thought but also action, more specifically actions that reach the community (Byram et al., 2016; Porto & Byram, 2015a).

Very few intercultural citizenship studies as conceptualized in this way exist (Byram et al., 2016) and they are located in Argentina, China, Denmark, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Sweden, South Korea, Taiwan, the United Kingdom and the USA. They are examples of how learners of different ages and different levels of linguistic competence in different languages can be taught on the basis of the principles of intercultural citizenship mentioned before.

#### **4. What about language learning?**

The cases presented in Byram et al. (2016), including this project, were conceived as curriculum development experiments designed to test the transferability of the theoretical principles and philosophical rationale behind intercultural citizenship education to the language classroom. The projects have been successful in providing opportunities for students to use languages for meaningful content related with citizenship and an intercultural perspective. Although this project was not specifically designed to test language improvement as a result of an intercultural citizenship intervention, there was a strong language focus because it was undertaken in language courses in both countries (English in Argentina and Spanish in Britain). The intercultural citizenship project was introduced in the language courses as a pedagogic innovation in addition to the specific focus on language required by the language departments.

Departing from the belief that “when language is separated from academic content and when students have little contact with L2-speaking peers, their opportunities for learning are limited” (Lightbown, 2014, p.16), this intercultural citizenship project was thought as a

CLIL project aimed at introducing a citizenship element in regular ELT through a challenging theme. As Cenoz (2015, p.17) explains, “the basic idea behind the integration of content and language is that languages are not learned first and then used but that they are learned by being used”. The project involved reading, writing, speaking and listening in English and in Spanish about the dictatorship and the 1978 football World Cup.

Language learning is not viewed here in terms of knowledge of the language as a system but rather as the development of multiliteracies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Rowsell, 2013) that allow individuals to use their available language(s) in multiple contexts of work, study, entertainment, travel, etc. (García, 2009) appropriately to satisfy their communicative, interpersonal and other purposes, in a variety of sign systems and mediums, including print, non-print, visual, digital, multimodal or others (Hagood & Skinner, 2012). A plurilingual perspective pointing to the need to “draw on learners’ full linguistic repertoires” (Taylor & Snoddon, 2013, p.440) and to develop the capacity to shuttle “between different communities and contexts, with the ability to negotiate the different discourses making each context” (Canagarajah, 2005, p.32) is paramount.

## **5. The research**

The project was designed as a case study (Gomm, Hammersley & Foster, 2000; Yin, 2009) and the research question was ‘Does an intercultural citizenship project lead to language learning?’

Conversational data comprise recorded Skype conversations and class discussions; chats in the wiki and Facebook, and email conversations. There were 23 mixed nationality groups of Argentinian and British students which produced an average of 10 hours of talk each. Each Skype conversation was usually between one and two hours, sometimes more. Documentary data comprise 23 collaborative leaflets or posters, one per group; and individual reflection logs. The Argentinian students also completed the *Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters* (AIE) (Byram et al., 2009). The AIE is a resource produced by the Council of Europe that encourages users to reflect on a particular encounter with ‘another’, in this case the students from the British university. It consists of a sequence of questions based on the theory of intercultural competence and citizenship.

Data were analysed qualitatively following the guidelines and procedures in Corbin and Strauss (2014) and Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2011). Confidentiality and ethical issues were addressed and students signed informed consent forms to allow disclosure of their productions, with pseudonyms.

The data analysis phase focused on four aspects, selected on the basis of a brief review of key aspects investigated in CLIL contexts and in need of further research (Cenoz, 2015; Heras & Lasagabaster, 2015; Cenoz & Ruiz de Zarobe, 2015; Meyer, Coyle, Halbach, Schuck, & Ting, 2015): motivation, language awareness, vocabulary development, and plurilingual competences within translingual practices.

## **6. Analysis and findings**

### **6.1. Motivation**

Banegas (2012) and Heras and Lasagabaster (2015) point out that CLIL projects are motivating and motivation correlates with language learning (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003). “Students seem to feel more motivated to learn foreign languages, as they undergo less stress and anxiety in a learning environment in which the focus is not only on language forms but also on meaning and communication” (Heras & Lasagabaster, 2015, p.72). For instance, in the Autobiographies of Intercultural Encounters (AIE) Amalia valued the opportunity to interact with native speakers positively:

*It was pretty exciting talking to a native speaker, [name of British peer] was nice to us, she even told us we had a good English level. It was the first time I did something like that and I must say I would do it again, the experience you gain is amazing, in fact, I think that it is the best way to learn to communicate, we do not have the chance in our everyday life to get in touch with a native speaker so this is a really good opportunity.*

Initially talking to a native speaker generated anxiety

*I was worried about two things, first of all if [name of British peer] was going to be able to get our English, which was a great surprise because of what she told us later; and, secondly, if I had the proficiency required to communicate and make my contributions as clear as possible (Amalia, AIE).*



But Amalia overcame her nervousness and uncertainties and saw the project as motivational and inspirational:

*I really appreciate the fact that the teachers work with stuff like this, giving us the opportunity to get in touch with native speakers, to compare cultures, to give our opinions, etc. This is, I think, the only project of this kind throughout the course of studies and *experience of this kind is really necessary for our training*. Being a professional is not just reading books and photocopies to pass our exams.*

Similarly, in their AIEs Faustina and Emilia expressed comparable uneasiness regarding the encounter with native speakers, and mentioned feelings of nervousness and anxiety which were neutralised by the opportunity to put the foreign language in use in a real situation:

*I was really nervous because I thought I would have trouble understanding her [the British peer]. Fortunately, she didn't have a strong British accent so I could easily follow her. I especially enjoyed listening to her speak; her pronunciation was just perfect and pleasant-sounding. She was friendly and to my surprise she spoke Spanish very well so we had no problem communicating (...) it was a great opportunity to put in practice my English language skills (Faustina).*

*I met a British girl because of a project we were asked to do. The first time I talked to her I was a bit nervous because I didn't know if I was supposed to speak English or Spanish, and I didn't know if she could understand me or if I would be able to understand her accent. In the end, everything worked out fine and we were able to speak fluently and without any problem (Emilia).*

Overall, for these students the project represented a chance to communicate successfully with native speakers using the target language in a genuine context.

## 6.2. Language awareness

Language awareness, implicit and explicit, is part of language learning and involves several domains, namely affective (positive attitudes, sense of achievement), social (language varieties), power (ideologies behind languages), cognitive (awareness of patterns, rules, etc.) and performance (awareness underpinning mastery) (James & Garrett, 1991). For instance, in this project communicating with native speakers was perceived as unusual and led to self-consciousness of the need to adjust speech in specific ways (affective and cognitive domains):

*It was probably an unusual experience because talking to foreign students is not something that happens every day, at least it isn't for us. (...) I tried to express myself as clear as possible. And I asked questions whenever I felt the need (...) I tried to make myself understood by talking slowly and clearly. Sometimes we had to repeat words or explain them in other words or use synonyms in the same language or switch languages to make ourselves understood (Faustina, AIE).*

*I think that this encounter was an unusual experience not only for [name of British peer] but for us as well. I don't think she has the opportunity to talk to foreign students every day. In fact, we don't have that opportunity either, that's why I think it was very helpful not only to know other cultures but to improve our English skills (...) I always tried to sound polite and I tried to make myself clear. When we spoke in English I tried to maintain a particular accent and if I didn't know a word, I asked my partners for help. Also, when I spoke in Spanish, I tried to talk slower so [name of British peer] could understand what I was saying. I tried to use a neutral accent without using any Argentinian idioms (Emilia, AIE).*

Communication with the British peers led to explicit awareness of the linguistic benefits of the project (“it really helped with my fluency and my communication ability” – Amalia, AIE-; “I think it was very helpful not only to know other cultures but to improve our English skills” –Emilia, AIE) (affective, cognitive and performance domains), awareness of linguistic varieties (“she had a strange accent, and difficult to get sometimes”, Amalia, AIE) (social domain) and awareness of speech accommodation (“we even had to

type for her some words that she didn't know, and we also had to slow our speed", Amalia, AIE) (social and cognitive domains). Some students also gained awareness of their own weaknesses – a springboard for further learning (James & Garrett, 1991):

I think that *interacting with a native speaker of the language you are learning is the best way to actually put it in practice what you have learned about that language. It has also helped me realize what I have to improve. I found it difficult to work in a team* (Faustina, AIE).

In sum, language awareness in its several facets (affective, social, power, cognitive and performance) was an important part of language learning in this setting.

### 6.3. Translanguaging and vocabulary development

As the students in each mixed nationality group negotiated the content, format and language of their awareness-raising leaflet, they engaged in translanguaging understood as the ability to shuttle between different languages and contexts (Canagarajah, 2005). The following group conversation extract shows that students found media sources in French and Italian and decided to translate them into English (evidence in italics) ('Eso es lo que dice la imagen en francés. Ahí está en español, y nosotras lo tendríamos que poner en inglés'). This occurred as they were doing several things simultaneously: they were speaking Spanish and English, reading 'text' in other languages (French, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, English) ('Esta está en portugués'; 'Es en italiano'), translating text from one language into another ('Voy a traducirlo'), writing ('Can you write it, please?'), and using digital resources and tools (shown in underlining) ('Voy a traducirlo en la red... ¿Eso lo compartiste con nosotras?'). The extract shows the conception of language learning as multiliteracies development that supports this project (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; García, 2009; Rowsell, 2013) ('al lado de la imagen tiene la explicación que es lo que dicen los textos de la imagen').

ENG: *¿Voy a escribir sobre esta imagen o no? ¿Porque es en francés no?*

ARG1: *Claro, por eso mismo, pero fíjate que al lado de la imagen tiene la explicación, que es lo que dicen los textos de la imagen.*

ENG: *Sí.*

ARG1: *Está en castellano, la idea sería ponerlo en inglés para que esta parte del folleto sea en inglés.*

ENG: *Sí.*

ARG2: *Entonces habría que traducir... ahí te mando. Te lo mando por skype. Eso es lo que dice la imagen en francés. Ahí está en español, y nosotras lo tendríamos que poner en inglés.*

(...)

ARG1: *Así ponemos una [imagen] de cada país y vamos variando.*

ARG2: *Esta está en portugués pero no sé de donde será. Dice París. Ah no, o francés.*

ENG: *No es en francés.*

ARG2: *¿Francés?*

ENG: *No, no es en francés.*

ARG1: *En portugués entonces.*

ENG: *Sí creo. ¿Podemos traducirlo?*

(...)

ENG: *Un momento. Voy a traducirlo en la red. Un momento. Es en italiano.*

ARG1: *Ah ahí está. ¿Eso lo compartiste con nosotras?*

ENG: *Sí.*

ARG2: *¿En dónde? Porque no sé dónde está. ¿Dónde está? No sé... Ah ahí está, ahí está. Transformar a la copa del mundo en un foro internacional contra el fascismo - liga por los derechos y la liberación del pueblo, ¿eso es?*

ENG: *Sí.*

ARG2: *Ah bueno. Y esto...¿ lo pondríamos en inglés?*

ARG1: *Para que se entienda mejor.*

ENG: *Transform the world cup into an international forum against fascism, and then it says: league for the rights and liberation of the people.*

ARG1: *OK. Can you write it, please? Ahí está. ¡Ok. Re bien gracias!*

ARG2: *Tendríamos que hacer eso más o menos con las descripciones de las demás imágenes.*

ENG: *Puedo hablar francés así que puedo traducir las otras si quieres.*

(...)

ARG2: Eso es lo que decíamos. *Esa descripción ponerla en inglés.*

(Skype conversation, Group 2)

As students negotiated complex meanings about a sensitive topic, they engaged in vocabulary negotiation. The following exchange is devoted to finding expressions in English for ‘exilio’ and ‘intervenido’. Evidence of vocabulary negotiation appears in italics and evidence of translinguaging is underlined:

ENG: Editor.

ARG1: *The editor was fired. And he had to... se tuvo que exiliar. Exilio... how do you call it?*

ENG: *What was in Spanish?*

ARG: *Exilio.*

(...)

ENG: *Oh exile. Yeah it's exile.*

ARG1: How?

ENG: *It's exile.*

(...)

ARG1: *So, well... there was a sports newspaper that was called... is called El Gráfico... (...) so El Gráfico was also intervenido? Cómo se dice intervenido?*

ENG: *Taken over?*

ARG1: *Yes, taken over by the Junta.*

(Skype conversation, Group 4)

Clearly the group was learning language by addressing new content related with human rights violations during dictatorship and this language learning was more significant than simply acquiring two new vocabulary items (exile, taken over). The extract can be seen as an important clarification loop involving code switching and plurilingual practices in which the students were putting their languages and available resources in use to address specific linguistic barriers through negotiation skills.

In sum, the data analysed in this article problematise the conceptualisation of

language learning in terms of linguistic competence based on the normative and static understanding of a linguistic system. We see here students who can be defined as ‘translingual cosmopolitan learners’ (Canagarajah, 2013), i.e. learners who negotiated on equal terms departing from their own positionalities, showing willingness to contribute and negotiate meanings by engaging their plurilingual repertoires and practices such as code switching and translation.

## 7. Conclusion

In this study, multimodal digital literacies were combined with an online intercultural communication exchange between Argentinian and British college students to develop intercultural citizenship in the English and Spanish foreign language classrooms. While previous studies demonstrated growth in self/intercultural awareness, criticality, social justice responsibility, and a sense of community of ‘international peers’, this study addressed the question of whether intercultural citizenship education leads to language learning. Findings indicate that students found the project motivational and inspirational, developed language awareness, widened their vocabularies and engaged in plurilingual practices within a translingual orientation.

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## **13 Adolescent and adult EFL learners' vocabulary learning and teaching beliefs**

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### **1. Introduction**

In recent years, research within the fields of Cognitive Psychology and Applied Linguistics has focused considerable attention on the nature and effects of learner beliefs on language learning. According to White (2008), beliefs serve to guide the ways in which learners make sense of their experiences and behave. Although Barcelos (2003) contends that beliefs are rather elusive to explain, the researcher highlights the contextual nature of beliefs and defines them as a cognitive as well as social construct. The purpose of this paper is to report partial findings on a more comprehensive research study that investigated the perceptions, beliefs and learning strategies regarding the learning and teaching of vocabulary. In this work we focus on beliefs and perceptions of students of two different age groups (adolescents and adults) enrolled in different educational institutions. In the remainder of the paper, we present first the theoretical framework on which the study is grounded and review studies in the field. Secondly, we describe the broader research study and describe the methodology we employed to collect and analyze the data. Thirdly, we refer to the results by analyzing the similarities and differences found in the two age groups. To conclude, we mention some of the pedagogical implications of the findings and make suggestions for further research.

## **2. Literature review**

The last two decades have witnessed a steady growth in research on language learning beliefs and perceptions; however, scant attention has been given to learner beliefs regarding vocabulary teaching and/or learning. Research has tended to focus on analyzing vocabulary teaching and learning beliefs that both pre-service and in-service teachers hold and the ways in which those perceptions impact on their teaching practice (Gao & Ma, 2011; Hassankiadeh, Jahanda, & Khodabandehlou, 2012; Macalister, 2012).

As regards vocabulary learning beliefs from the learners' perspective, most studies concentrate on university level students. Simon and Taverniers (2011) explored advanced learners' beliefs on the learning and teaching of English grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary and compared the learners' views on these three aspects. They made use of a questionnaire as the main data collection strategy and found that students considered vocabulary to be different from grammar and pronunciation; they also observed that students deemed in-class grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary exercises to be of importance as well. Targońska (2013) investigated learners' preferences as regards vocabulary exercises. In her research, she studied 96 students of German as a foreign language and, based on the subjective evaluations of "attractiveness of particular lexical exercises" (p. 79), she distinguished 11 categories of factors that influence the learners' perception of that task as motivating or attractive. Along similar lines, De Florio-Hansen (2004) resorted to a questionnaire made up of questions on attitudes, beliefs and behavior to find out how German university students of English, French, Italian and Spanish learn vocabulary and improve their lexical competence. The data she collected revealed a differentiation of processes that students make use of that could be placed on a continuum from a structured to an unstructured approach to vocabulary study. Amiryousefi (2015) studied the beliefs about vocabulary learning and teaching of both students and educators in Iran. The researcher found that both groups believe that vocabulary knowledge and vocabulary use are important, and that vocabulary and grammar are of equal importance. A relevant aspect of this study is how heterogeneous the group of learners who took part in this study was, with ages ranging from 14 to 39 and with varied proficiency levels.

As this review suggests, some studies have explored and provided evidence of the vocabulary beliefs that teachers, student-teachers and learners hold. Nevertheless, it is

desirable to conduct further research in order to analyze the perceptions and beliefs about vocabulary teaching and learning that learners from different age groups have and compare and/or contrast them in different contexts, taking into different variables such as age.

### **3. Theoretical framework**

Learner beliefs is a central construct both in Cognitive Psychology and Applied Linguistics. In psychology, these beliefs started to be studied as an important element of learner differences. They are included in the broader term “learner cognition”. In the field of Applied Linguistics, they became a focus of study with the shift from a teacher-centered to a student-centered approach to teaching.

The construct has been defined in various ways and different terms have been used (e.g. *learner representations* (Holec, 1987 in Barcelos, 2008); *metacognitive knowledge* (Wenden, 1986a in Barcelos, 2008); BAK (*beliefs, assumptions and knowledge*) (Woods, 1996), among others). Pajares (1992) calls it a “messy construct” (p. 307) in his seminal paper about teachers’ beliefs. At any rate, most definitions and characterizations of beliefs agree that they are relatively stable, are socially construed, and act as a filter of reality (Mendez, 2007). Most also acknowledge a relationship between beliefs and actions and consider that beliefs are evaluative and may be conscious or unconscious (Borg, 2001). Here, we use the term belief to include assumptions, perceptions, attitudes and representations (Borg, 2006). Following Victori and Lockhart (1995), we define learner beliefs as “general assumptions that students hold about themselves as learners, about factors influencing language learning, and about the nature of language learning and teaching” (p. 224). In other words, they comprise conceptions not only about how languages are learned and should be taught but also perceptions about the students’ self-efficacy, attitudes and self-concept.

Language learner beliefs are considered to have a strong impact on students’ observable and non-observable behavior in mainly two aspects. They influence the students’ general approach to learning and their choice of strategies and because of this they may even have an impact on final success (Breen, 2001). Learners may develop facilitative beliefs, which will have a positive impact on learning, whereas other may hold inhibiting beliefs, which will lead to wrong decisions as regards learning (Bernat &

Gvozdenko, 2005). Beliefs and actions are dynamically interconnected but as Barcelos (2008) points out they must be studied in context since they are also socially determined. Because “they play a critical role in defining behavior and organizing knowledge and information” (Pajares, 1992, p. 325), it is necessary that educators take them into account in a systematic way.

#### **4. Research project**

This small-scale study reports partial findings on a more comprehensive research study that investigated the perceptions, beliefs and learning strategies regarding the learning and teaching of vocabulary. The research project was carried out by a group of researchers at the School of Languages, Córdoba National University during 2014 and 2015. In order to collect data, the broader project made use of different strategies such as a questionnaire, open-ended interviews and vocabulary tests administered on two different occasions.

#### **5. Methodology**

We resorted to two instruments to collect data: a structured close-ended questionnaire and open-ended interviews. Here, we only report on findings from the questionnaire. The questionnaire was drawn up by the research team. Prior to be administered to all the participants, it was piloted and a few changes were introduced afterwards in relation to the wording of the questions. The questionnaire consisted of sixteen questions with a likert-scale, which aimed to gather information about the learners’ vocabulary learning strategies (VLSs) (6 questions), beliefs about vocabulary learning (7 questions) as well as the participants’ self-assessment of their own vocabulary learning (3 questions). To enrich the breath of some of the information we collected by means of the questionnaire, a subset of the participants were interviewed in order to elicit examples of the VLSs they made use of to inquire further into their beliefs in case some doubts had arisen out of the answers to the questionnaire.

The participants of the study can be divided into two different groups according to their age: adults and adolescents. The adult learners were students of English at a language school which belongs to the School of Languages, UNC, and they were enrolled in either an extensive or intensive course<sup>1</sup>. A total of 29 adult learners participated in the study. As

regards the adolescent learners, they were secondary school students from three different institutions: a private secondary school, a state-run secondary school and a pre-university school. Furthermore, a few adolescents enrolled in an English course at a private language school also took part. In all, 81 adolescents answered the questionnaire.

Data analysis involved examining the learners' beliefs about vocabulary teaching and learning in order to find similarities and/or differences between the two age groups. Although reference is sometimes made to quantitative data, the analysis is mainly qualitative.

## **6. Results and discussion**

The analysis involved comparing and/or contrasting the answers to seven questions in the questionnaire. The questions aimed to elicit the participants' beliefs as regards different dimensions of vocabulary teaching and learning. The questions are included in Appendix 1.

### **6.1. Similarities**

Regarding the learners' beliefs about the importance attested to vocabulary in the lessons they attended, most of the participants of both age groups think that vocabulary work is very important or quite important in their lessons. Therefore, it can be assumed a large part of the lessons is devoted to dealing with vocabulary.

When asked about whether the variable *aptitude* may have an impact on vocabulary learning, the largest number of participants states that they believe that the learners' capacity for learning does influence the learning of vocabulary. Answers range mainly from the options "totally agree" to "agree". In general, adult learners totally agree with the statement whereas adolescent learners mainly agree with it though not completely. Despite the fact that none of the questions elicited their beliefs as regards the role of external factors such as the teacher's intervention and/or the influence of teaching materials, the answers lend support to an innatist view of learning which places emphasis on the learner's inborn capacities.

The participants were also asked to rate how important it is to have a good mastery of vocabulary in order to communicate effectively. The largest percentage of answers range

from “very important” to “important” and the former option is the one that the participants chose the most. This tendency is evident both among adult and adolescent learners.

From different theoretical perspectives, different dimensions of the target language have been found to play a central role. Grammar and vocabulary are two of the dimensions that learners need to acquire and develop in order to be able to communicate in English. The participants were questioned whether they thought that grammar, vocabulary or both contributed to effective communication. By far, most of them indicate that both (grammar and vocabulary) are important. It has also been found among most of the learners of both age groups that lexis is the most important aspect to communicate in English. This was mainly the case for secondary school learners and those enrolled in the intensive course. However, the percentage was much lower when compared to the option “both”. These findings lend support to those reported by Amiryousefi (2015). The researcher also found that both learners and teachers in Iran believe that vocabulary knowledge and vocabulary use are important, and that vocabulary and grammar are of equal value. Grammar was the least frequent option in most cases since only a slight percentage of participants chose it. It follows from the answers to the last two questions that the participants conceive of communication as involving the mastery of grammar and vocabulary. It must also be noted that the questions did not make reference to other dimensions such as the development of skills, communicative and/or intercultural competence, for example. Thus, the participants cannot be said to restrict their view of language to just grammar and vocabulary.

The fifth question inquired whether the participants thought that vocabulary mistakes could hinder effective communication. Most of the learners agree with the statement but the second most frequent answer is “not sure”. The same tendency is found across all the contexts and the two age groups. These answers reinforce the importance given to vocabulary as an essential dimension of language and communication.

The belief that vocabulary practice is key to learning vocabulary is expressed by the largest percentage of participants of both groups. The most frequent answer in this case is “important” and, among some of the participants, especially members of the adult extensive course, the most frequently answered option is “very important”. These findings are in keeping with Simon and Taverniers’ (2011) who also concluded that the participants in

their study believed that in-class grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary exercises were an essential element in order to learn vocabulary.

The last question included in the analysis carried out here involved exploring the participants' beliefs about how difficult it is for them to learn new words in English. It seems that for most of the learners it is an easy task since the most frequent choices are “not very difficult” and “easy”. Therefore, learning new vocabulary does not pose many difficulties for the learners and, as long as they are provided with opportunities for practice, they can acquire new vocabulary items and enlarge their vocabulary repertoire.

## **6.2. Differences**

As regards the differences found between the two age groups, when asked about the importance of vocabulary in their English classes, one noticeable difference is that a few students from the three high schools chose the options “little” or “no importance.” However, in the case of the adult learners, none of the students selected these options. What is more, a considerable number of students from the private secondary school expressed that little attention is placed on vocabulary. It would be interesting to corroborate this perception with class observations or interviews to teachers.

Regarding the question about the impact of learners' inborn capacity for learning vocabulary, almost one fifth of the teen-age students from two of the secondary schools expressed disagreement with the statement. This may indicate that some adolescent learners believe that there are other factors that may have a more important influence on vocabulary learning.

Regarding the importance of having a good command of vocabulary for effective communication in English, even though most students agree on its importance, a minority of the high school students chose the options “not very important” and “of little importance” whereas none of the adult learners considered these options.

Another difference that can be observed is related to the importance of vocabulary exercises for language learning. A wider range of options is found in the case of the high school students, with more diversity in the private sector. A small, yet considerable number of students in the private high school indicated that vocabulary activities are not so important.

The last difference found in this analysis was related to the learners' perceived difficulty for learning new words. It is worth noting that only one of the adult learners considered learning vocabulary to be a very easy task, whereas six adolescents from both the public schools and the private language school expressed that learning vocabulary was very easy. Again, more variety of choices is observed in the case of the high school students, both in the private and the state institutions.

## **7. Conclusion and implications**

Our study has been an initial attempt at exploring the beliefs of two age groups of EFL learners about vocabulary learning and teaching. It is evident that learners come to class with opinions, conceptions and representations and although the concept of learner differences has been around for some time, the systematic analysis of learner beliefs is still uncommon.

Despite the age difference, we found that there were many similarities among the responses given by the two groups of learners. It may, therefore, be assumed that some of these beliefs might have been socially construed. For instance, the perception of the role of aptitude in vocabulary acquisition is a case in point. As teachers we need to consider the impact that, for example, a negative self-concept could have on students' approach to learning. It would be interesting to investigate whether these inhibiting beliefs can be restructured through the intervention of the teacher.

This study intended to raise awareness of the role that learner beliefs play since we firmly believe that

[i]dentification of these beliefs and reflection on their potential impact on language learning and teaching in general, as well as in more specific areas such as the learners' expectations and strategies used, can inform future syllabus design and teacher practice in the course (Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005, p. nd).

In Barcelos' view (2008), discussions about second language acquisition could be integrated into teaching activities in the class so that students may be afforded an opportunity to not only reflect on their beliefs but also analyse any social restraints that may be inhibiting their potential for learning.



Future studies could explore the relationship between beliefs and other individual learner factors. A longitudinal study could also examine the stability or fluctuation of learner beliefs and more specifically whether these could be restructured by teachers' intervention.

## Notes

1. For an analysis of this external factor see Lopez Barrios, M. & E. Villanueva de Debat (in press). El desarrollo del léxico: Análisis de factores internos y externos que influyen en el aprendizaje. In XV Jornadas y II Congreso Latinoamericano de Enseñanza de Lenguas Extranjeras en el Nivel Superior "Lenguas y culturas: Desafíos actuales de la diversidad y de la integración" Universidad Nacional de Córdoba. November 12 -14, 2015.

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## **Appendix 1**

1. How important is vocabulary in the lesson you attend?

Very important – Quite important – Not very important – A little important – Not important at all

2. Do you think learning vocabulary depends on the learner's aptitude?

Totally agree – Agree – Partly agree – Disagree

3. How important is it to have a good mastery of vocabulary in order to communicate effectively?

Very important – Important – Not very important – A little important – Not important at all

4. In order to communicate in English, which is the most important aspect?

Vocabulary – Grammar – Both

5. Do you think that vocabulary mistakes hinder effective communication?

Yes – No – Not sure

6. How important is it to do vocabulary exercises in order to learn vocabulary?

Very important – Important – Not very important – A little important – Not important at all

7. How difficult is it for you to learn new words in English?

Very difficult – Difficult – Not very difficult – Easy – Very easy

## 14 The CLIL road from planning to assessment: Case studies in Patagonia

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### 1. Introduction

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is an approach which promotes content learning through another language (Ball, Kelly & Clegg, 2015). As such, it creates a collaborative space not only in practice between content and language teachers (Escobar Urmeneta, 2013) but also at a theoretical level since it integrates sociocultural, cognitivist, and critical theories of education and learning (Llinares, 2015).

Although European-conceived, a wide range of CLIL models have been implemented in different contexts outside Europe. In Argentina, CLIL is usually adopted as a language-driven approach in private formal education, and to a lesser extent in state education. Language learning is a priority and content is subsidiary to language. While the literature offers CLIL reports around issues such as motivation, language development, materials design and discourse analysis, we aim at exploring CLIL pedagogies through teachers' eyes by examining a longer process which takes us from lesson planning to lesson delivery and assessment.

The aim of this paper is to analyse as case studies, the practices of two secondary school teachers based in southern Argentina and to understand how language-driven CLIL is conceptualised and enacted from lesson planning to assessment. The teachers showed that they moved from a topic-based to a content-based approach through negotiation, collaboration, and reading CLIL literature. Assessment was focused on either language or content depending on the language skill they wished to develop.

## **2. CLIL: from planning to assessment**

Although CLIL is spreading at a fast pace across educational levels and contexts (Broca, 2016; Dafouz & Guerrini, 2009; Korosidou and Griva, 2016), it has reached a stage of critique and reflection around its implementation and research (Pérez Cañado, 2016). CLIL in the context of this study, a secondary school in the city of San Martín de los Andes (Argentina), refers to the integration of English as a foreign language (EFL) and curricular content in the EFL lesson. It follows that we envisage CLIL as a language teaching approach (Cenoz, 2013).

Several authors have examined lesson planning based on professional accounts and research (Banegas, 2015; Bentley, 2010). They all agree that CLIL, in order for it to be a meaningful and sustainable experience, needs to adopt a holistic lens. CLIL lesson planning is guided by clear and feasible aims which respond to both curricular and language learning. In addition, procedures, cognitive strategies, materials and activities should also receive careful consideration for the achievement of logical operationalisation of CLIL core features.

For the purposes of this descriptive-exploratory case study, we define assessment as “any formal or informal attempt to elicit the content knowledge that students may have in order to evaluate its quality and/or quantity” (Gablasova, 2014, p. 152). According to Massler, Stotz and Queisser (2014, p. 138), “assessment has so far been something of a blind spot in many CLIL programmes”. Therefore, it is necessary that classroom research looks into this vital element of teaching and learning within a larger pedagogical framework. In this line, Kiely (2014) adds that:

the dual-focus of CLIL is a fundamental characteristic of the approach, and must guide planning and implementation. Assessment, understood both as periodic sampling and measurement, and ongoing planning for and provision of feedback, can provide a basis for understanding the characteristics of good practices in schools and classrooms. The development of assessment practice should be based on a dialogue with teachers. This means the development of frameworks which guide teachers in their planning and pedagogic strategies, and supporting teachers in using

these to shape schemes of work, lesson plans, worksheets, responses to written work, and especially in micro-interactions with students in CLIL classrooms.

With such a framework in mind, we put forward the following working questions:

- How do teachers enact CLIL as a language teaching approach?
- What principles guide their lesson planning?
- How do they envisage assessment? In what ways does assessment respond to content and language integration? What criteria and principles do they follow?

### **3. Context and methodology**

The context of our research was a secondary school in San Martín de los Andes, Neuquén, Argentina. The whole secondary school is divided into five levels from A1 to B2 (CEFR). Students have English lessons four days a week, one-hour period each day. To carry out the project we contacted the school authorities in order to share with them the objectives of the study. All five teachers of English were invited to participate but only two joined the project.

Framed as case studies, we examined the participants' initial explorations with CLIL practices including lesson planning, teaching and assessment during one school term. Qualitative data collection included syllabi analysis, questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations and journal keeping. Results were interpreted on the basis of content and thematic analysis. The results analysed in this paper emerged from lesson plan analysis, classroom observations and interviews.

For the purpose of this study we will use pseudonyms to refer to the teachers that carried out the experience, Patricia and Tina. Patricia is an experienced teacher of English who has been working at primary and secondary levels for twenty years now. Tina, on the other hand, is a recently-graduated teacher of English who has not much experience in teaching but who is very interested in trying out new ideas and methodologies. Students at both levels are between 13 and 15 years old. Their language level is between A1 and A2, the lowest levels at school. There were about 20 students in each class.

The teachers were encouraged to read papers on specific CLIL practices and then, they were asked to choose the topics around which they wished to carry out the experience. The

authors suggested incorporating curriculum-based contents related to learners' interests. After discussion, one of them decided to develop a three-month project in which students would study English speaking countries in depth, and the other teacher planned a whole module on the Aztecs.

Syllabi were analysed and it was observed that previous to this study, the teachers had organised them around topics included in their adopted coursebooks. In this particular case, the content was chosen independently, it was not within the coursebooks. They had to search for material, analyse their relevance and plan suitable activities for the particular group.

Teachers showed the authors their classroom plans and a profuse exchange of ideas and reformulation was the follow-up of this initial stage. Introducing teachers into *new* teaching practices and theoretical background gave them further insights into how to reflect and judge their own teaching.

## **4. Case Studies**

### **4.1. Case 1: Patricia**

Patricia submitted a sequence of lessons around the topic of Latin American ancient civilizations: Maya, Inca and Aztec. She aimed to cover such a topic over eight lessons. Her sequence was a combination of lesson planning and reflective journal. For instance, at the beginning of her sequence she wrote:

I started looking for material and most of what I would have liked to use was in a higher level of language, I didn't and I don't want my students to feel frustrated so I picked up a book from Scholastics that suited the purpose. I'll use the material as trigger activities or ideas and then, students will have to expand in order to give an oral presentation at the end and a short summary of what they've learnt to share with other groups from the class. Students will be divided in three groups: two of five and one of six, the last one including a student that is a starter. Each group will be given one of the civilizations: Maya, Inca and Aztec. (Patricia)

Patricia set the following teaching aims:

- To learn cooperatively.
- To talk about an ancient civilization cohesively.
- To summarise ideas in short texts.
- To express fluently in an oral presentation.

While the content side of her lessons was evident from the topic, the language focus included subject-specific vocabulary (e.g. sewer system), language functions (e.g. summarising), and grammar (e.g. past simple and time connectors). To work with such contents she selected adapted reading texts, maps, videos and pictures. Activities included were answering comprehension questions about reading texts, labelling current countries and ancient civilizations on a map, producing information based on pictures, looking for information to display a mural, finding a video about one civilization and producing questions for their peers to answer, writing a script and role playing a scene of daily life in such cultures, listening to a legend and summarising it, completing a chart to compare and contrast civilizations around aspects such as family or hierarchies.

When she shared with us her sequence, we observed that her plan focused on the content side. We suggested that students needed more guidance and that scaffolding on content and language was necessary. Language seemed to be peripheral. With those suggestions, she reformulated and implemented her plan.

Due to geographical and time limitations, only Gabriela observed Patricia on two occasions. In the first lesson, the observer noted that some learners had not prepared their presentations, some others were absent and others were required by another content teacher. Consequently, the teacher decided to postpone the oral presentations. She seemed to be frustrated and annoyed with the fact that she was not told in advance about the absence of students that were supposed to give their presentations. The second lesson observed was the last lesson of the thematic sequence. Three groups of learners made their presentations. Because the presentation was considered an instance of assessment, Patricia explained that she would assess fluency and content understanding. No rubrics were used. Her interventions during the three presentations were (1) questions to help learners develop or explain content and (2) correction of pronunciation by providing the most appropriate form.



During the Skype-mediated interview with both Gabriela and Darío, the following themes emerged: (1) assessment as an individual process, (2) learner-centred CLIL, and (3) language development.

As regards the first theme, Patricia favoured formative assessment through group presentations. She remarked that she would keep this assessment instrument because the learners were used to it with her. However, every learner received his/her own mark. She explained that:

Every student got their own mark depending on their own progress. In general I assess fluency and use of specific vocabulary. But with some students I also value their confidence to talk in front of their peers. To a lesser extent I assess content. I want to make sure they understand what they're saying so I ask them questions that can help them explain something a bit more.

Although the learners received a mark for their final product, the presentation, the process of collecting materials and developing the presentation were also considered.

Under learner-centred CLIL we have condensed those perceptions which indicate that for CLIL to be meaningful, it should be based on the learner. For example, Patricia noted that the first lessons on Latin American civilisations had been “a failure because the learners didn't choose the topic and you could tell that they had made their presentations because they had to”. She continued with CLIL explorations and another content was addressed. This time the learners were the ones to choose the topic, religion; they felt much more motivated and engaged. For this content, materials collection included written texts chosen by Patricia and the videos selected by the students. Collaboration was at the heart of this operationalisation of CLIL. Patricia then decided to have smaller groups so that the contribution of each learner was more noticeable and necessary. She also realised that in future CLIL explorations, more guidance and scaffolding was required by breaking down the processes of making a presentation into clearer stages.

When asked about the language side of her experience, she embraced CLIL as an opportunity to recycle discrete items learnt through their regular coursebook and teaching approach. She noted that due to these CLIL explorations, the learners improved their

comprehension of longer and complex texts and felt more confident to talk about a topic in front of others.

#### **4.2. Case 2: Tina**

Tina submitted a plan in which she aimed at developing content on “English speaking countries”. Student’s English level was A2. She stated that the aim of the lessons described was “to develop all four language skills within a content-based context considering learners’ learning styles”.

Tina presented a detailed plan of the activities she wished to carry out. She provided general information on each of the countries to be included and then, students were asked to choose the English speaking country they would like to work on and a topic around which to organise their project. These were the options given: literature, geography, history, art, music, celebrations, cuisine, people and daily life. Among the activities the teacher used in class, we can mention reading and listening comprehension exercises such as true or false statements and multiple-choice questions, carrying out role plays from a given model, labelling pictures, watching videos and taking notes.

Gabriela observed a class in which a pair of students was asked to give a prepared oral presentation on a famous landmark in England. Students had chosen Madame Tussaud’s museum in London. Students presented an interview that they themselves had recorded and they showed a video in which they could see the inside of the museum. The teacher had corrected the interview before the presentation. Tina spoke in English most of the time. When Tina elicited further information from students, they tended to respond in Spanish if they knew the answer. She encouraged the use of the L2. Anyhow, she made no interventions during the presentation itself.

An informal chat with Tina followed the observation. The observer asked Tina what she was “evaluating” in the presentation and she told “of course, creativity”, “mainly fluency”. No scoring rubrics had been written or explicitly stated. She said that she *felt* that they had incorporated language and she concluded that her plan was an initial revision to diagnose their language level as she did not know the students (she had been on maternity leave).

During the Skype-mediated interview with Tina, the following themes condensed the coding: (1) lesson planning as a straightforward process, (2) integrative assessment, and (3) perceptions and impact.

In relation to lesson planning she explained:

I took English-speaking countries as my conducting thread. For each country I chose a subject like Literature, History. For planning the lessons I took into account a bit of everything for all the skills and the grammar point I had to teach according to the curriculum, because the curriculum is all about grammar points...but the content, the topic I mean, was what guided me. I loved the topic and from there I developed the language side.

However, she also pointed out that in order to plan CLIL lessons with a language focus it is important to know the content. In her view, teachers need to be confident about the content before planning their lessons.

As for integrative assessment, Tina explained that her assessment tools, tests mainly, mirrored what she worked in class, i.e. the four skills. She illustrated her practice as follows:

One of the writing tasks we had seen in class was biographies. We saw Dickens and other writers. So when I had to make a test I included a biography. When I thought about the contents of the lessons I also knew that they'd be in the exam.

In relation to feedback in formal assessment, she did not give the right answer to cloze activities. Instead, she promoted peer correction for students to develop further language awareness.

With reference to perceptions and impact of the experience, Tina referred to her own as well as her learners' feelings. Content was selected according to her own likes and interests. As a teacher she enjoyed developing all the materials herself even when it proved to be a challenge. She chose the materials that she liked but she also considered what students told her. She met her learners' wishes to see a change in their learning experience. She concluded that it is important to include learners' interests when choosing specific contents so that the lessons become meaningful and motivating.

Tina felt that through this project she developed less grammar-centred lessons. Although in the interview she did not refer to the exam results to substantiate her findings, she noted that the learners had learnt the grammar in focus through the content. She added that some learners told her that they had learnt new contents through English and they had become more aware of certain grammatical structures in different texts. Some others requested grammar-based activities as they were afraid that the test would include the evaluation of discrete grammar points, not necessarily connected to the way in which the lessons had been tackled.

## **5. Discussion and conclusion**

We return to our research questions to analyse our findings.

### *Question 1: How do teachers enact CLIL as a language-driven teaching approach?*

It is interesting to observe that even when the teachers considered their experiences as language-driven, a focus on content prevailed over language. The approach was employed to either recycle learners' prior knowledge on language or introduce new language items tangentially. They also adopted a holistic perspective as they integrated lexis, grammar and work on written as well as oral skills. To promote learner engagement and further learning, the teachers favoured collaborative learning and a learner-centred stance; they tried to match the contents of their lessons to the learners' interests.

### *Question 2: What principles guide their lesson planning?*

Their lesson planning was guided by their knowledge of the content and the affordances the content could project on the grammar-based curriculum. The aims proposed for their lessons emphasized their interest in students acquiring new content but without disregarding language skills development. In both cases, the teachers resorted to offering variety in terms of activities which were sequenced in growing degrees of cognitive and linguistic complexity.

*Question 3: How do they envisage assessment? In what ways does assessment respond to content and language integration? What criteria and principles do they follow?*

Assessment, envisaged as a process embedded in teaching and learning, was dually-focused on language and content. Coherence between planning and assessment was evidenced throughout the experience. However, the absence of rubrics or more systematised practices may indicate certain degrees of intuition for grading or a need to agree on the nature of feedback beyond a formal numerical mark.

Having analysed these two cases, we would like to encourage new studies which examine if language- driven CLIL may strengthen learners' contextualised linguistic accuracy. Content should be the guiding principle both in lesson planning and assessment. Consequently, research is needed to back the impact of language-driven CLIL on language development.

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## 15 Making sense of resultative constructions in the EFL classroom

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### 1. Introduction

Resultative constructions are clauses in which, in addition to the main verb, there is another phrase that predicates some state or location that comes about for some participant in the event as a result of the action described by the clause. In the oft-cited example *John hammered the metal flat*, in which *hammer* is the main predicator, *flat* is the result predicated of the postverbal noun phrase *the metal*. Although the term “resultative” was coined by Halliday in 1967, only recently has the importance of resultative constructions been acknowledged in work in semantics and syntax as a type of covert event composition in which a dynamic event and a resulting state together represent a single, derived situation with no overt indication of the nature of the composition.

As it is precisely due to the composite character of this construction that EFL students very often have difficulty making sense of it, this paper aims to explore how resultatives behave grammatically and in terms of meaning. The goal is not only to fill a gap in the literature –given the lack of introductory material on this topic and the fact that resultatives are rarely discussed in textbooks– but also to shed light on the construction so that it is accessible to a readership that is new to the topic. Therefore, the complexity of the explanations will be kept to a minimum, since this paper is meant for EFL teachers who are not acquainted with the subject and who may need to deal with it in their classrooms in simple terms.

The various types of resultatives are outlined here mainly by focusing on event structure, i.e. on the grammatical processes and representations that are sensitive to

semantic and temporal phenomena. Indeed, many authors claim that the properties of resultatives are better explained by appeal to semantic notions (e.g. Goldberg 1995, Jackendoff 1997, and Van Valin 1990, among others) while other scholars have raised empirical problems for syntactic accounts (e.g. Rappaport Hovav and Levin 2001, Verspoor 1997 and Wechsler 1997).

## **2. Classification of resultative constructions in English**

Following Rappaport Hovav and Levin (2001), the resultative patterns that follow have been grouped according to whether or not they involve temporally dependent subevents<sup>1</sup>. In turn, each group has been classified taking into account if the result is predicated of the subject (subject-oriented) or the object (object-oriented) and also according to whether the verb in the construction takes an object and/or assigns accusative case (transitive-based resultative) or not (intransitive-based resultative). Where relevant, the status of the postverbal noun phrase (NP) is discriminated as a lexical requirement (argument) of the verb (selected NP) or not (unselected NP).

### **1) Resultatives with no distinct subevents (Simple event structure)**

Subject-oriented, intransitive-based<sup>2</sup> resultative:

- a) The window banged shut.
- b) The bottle broke open.
- c) The prisoner froze to death.
- d) The mirror shattered to pieces.

### **2) Resultatives with temporally dependent subevents (Simple event structure)**

2.1) Subject-oriented, intransitive-based resultative:

- a) Robin danced out of the room.
- b) Terry ran across the office.
- c) The truck rumbled into the runway.
- d) The whirling dervish spun into the hall.

2.2) Subject-oriented, transitive-based resultative (Selected NP):

- a) The wise men followed the star out of Bethlehem.
- b) The sailors managed to catch a breeze and ride it clear of the rocks.



- c) He followed Lassie free of his captors<sup>3</sup>.
- d) Robin danced tangos across the room.

2.3) Object-oriented, transitive-based resultative (Verb of exerting force)<sup>4</sup>:

- a) The firemen managed to pull some survivors from the wreckage.
- b) They yanked the nails out of the board.
- c) The coast guard tugged the raft back to shore.
- d) We pulled the crate out of the water.

3) Resultatives whose subevents need not be temporally dependent  
(Complex/causative event structure)

3.1) Object-oriented, intransitive-based resultative (Unselected NP):

- a) The dog barked us awake.
- b) The joggers ran the pavement thin.
- c) We ran our Nikes threadbare.
- d) I worked my fingers to the bone<sup>5</sup>.

3.2) Object-oriented, intransitive-based resultative (Unselected reflexive NP):

- a) Dad shouted himself hoarse.
- b) He slept himself sober.
- c) The shopkeeper grumbled herself calm.
- d) She slammed herself inside her bedroom.

3.3) Object-oriented, transitive-based resultative (Unselected NP):

- a) She cooked them all into a premature death with her wild food.
- b) The phone jangled me into consciousness.
- c) They drank the pub dry.
- d) She patiently sang the baby to sleep.

3.4) Object-oriented, transitive-based resultative (Unselected reflexive NP):

- a) I'm glad you didn't stay at the club drinking yourself dottier.
- b) She's going to fret herself sick at this rate.
- c) He hopes to play himself into shape.
- d) The cows ate themselves sick.

3.5) Object-oriented, transitive-based resultative (Selected NP):

- a) The silversmith pounded the metal flat.

- b) We watered the tulips flat.
- c) She rocked the baby to sleep.
- d) I wiped the table clean.

While the resultatives in both 1 and 2.1 are subject-oriented and have intransitive verbs, only those in 1 are like passive sentences in that the result is predicated about non-agentive subjects (Cf. 1.a and *The window was banged shut*). On the other hand, the resultatives in 2 and 3 involve two subevents, one represented by the verb and the other by the result phrase. Thus, 2.1.a and 2.2.d, for instance, involve an event of dancing (tangos) and an event of traversing a path that ends outside or on the other side of the room. However, while the two subevents in the resultatives in 2 are temporally dependent, those in 3 need not be, since the subevents do not have to be temporally coextensive or unfold at the same rate, as illustrated in 4 below, where the hoarseness comes about some time after the cheering is over.

- 4) John cheered his team wildly during the match. On waking up hoarse the next day, he remarked, “Well, I gather I’ve cheered myself hoarse.”

As regards the distinction between the resultatives in 2 and those in 3, the main feature that makes them different is that the event structure of the examples in 2 is simple whereas that of the sentences in 3 is causative and therefore complex. Thus, in 2.2.a, for example, following the star and leaving Bethlehem unfold together (i.e. there is a simple event structure in which the subevents are temporally dependent), which is why the causative paraphrase (The wise men’s following the star caused them to leave Bethlehem) does not reflect the relation between the two subevents. On the other hand, English verb-result phrase combinations like 3.2.c or 3.5.c describe a complex kind of event consisting of two subevents, one represented by the verb and the other by the result phrase, with the following features:

- a) There is one subevent (*grumbling* or *rocking the baby*) and a resulting subevent (*becoming calm* and *the baby falling asleep*) which are causally related, i.e. one causes the other to happen (viz. *The shopkeeper’s grumbling caused her to become calm* and *She made the baby fall asleep as a result of her rocking the baby*).

- b) The subevents do not have to be temporally dependent. Thus, the shopkeeper's grumbling does not necessarily extend to the point when the shopkeeper becomes calm. Further proof of the lack of temporal dependence is provided by adverbial modification: *She quickly rocked the baby to sleep* entails that the baby quickly fell asleep but does not specify the speed of the rocking; that is, the adverb does not necessarily modify both subevents.<sup>6</sup>
- c) The result subevent cannot start before the causing subevent (e.g. in 3.5.c, the baby falling asleep does not begin before being rocked), which follows from the nature of causation itself.
- d) The result subevent bounds (i.e. delimits or specifies the end point of) the entire event (e.g. in 3.5.c, rocking the baby finished when the baby fell asleep).

To summarise, the importance of the temporal relation between subevents to the analysis of resultatives needs to be stressed yet again. The complex/causative analysis applies to all resultatives whose subevents may be temporally dependent or not (3 above) while the simple event structure extends to all resultatives whose only event (1 above) or separate, coidentified subevents (2 above) are necessarily temporally dependent.

Although, in line with the literature on resultatives, all the resultative phrases in 3 are classified as object-oriented, this is a pedagogical simplification, given that the noun phrase (NP) that appears after the verb is not, strictly speaking, the direct object in all cases. Thus, the verbs in 3.1 and 3.2 are intransitive while those in 3.3 and 3.4 select objects other than the postverbal NPs found in these sentences (Cf. *They drank beer* (real direct object underlined) and *They drank all day*, *They drank (beer) in the pub*, *They drank the pub dry* and *They drank so much beer that they rendered the pub dry*). This is why the postverbal NP in the examples in 3.1 to 3.4 is regarded as unselected, i.e. it is not a lexical requirement (an argument) of the verb. However, the reason why this postverbal NP is necessary in such cases is that the causative (complex) event structure associated with these resultatives requires two NPs, one for each subevent (i.e. one for the causing subevent and another for the resulting subevent). Consequently, if a verb selects an NP but no result is predicated of

it or if a result involving causation is predicated but not of a postverbal NP, the sentence is interpreted either as a simple event structure - as illustrated by the sentences in 1 and 2 above - or else as ungrammatical, as the following examples show.

- 5) \* The dog barked awake.
- 6) \* The dog barked us.
- 7) \* Dad shouted hoarse.
- 8) \* Dad shouted himself.
- 9) \* They drank dry.
- 10) \* They drank the pub.
- 11) \* I'm glad you didn't stay at the club drinking dottier.
- 12) \* I'm glad you didn't stay at the club drinking yourself.

It seems, then, that the postverbal NP and the result phrase are predicated as a whole construction, rather than as separate constituents. This is what has led Hoekstra and other linguists to regard the postverbal NP and the result phrase as a verbless/small clause that functions as an adjunct rather than a direct object, both in these cases and in the ones exemplified in 3.5. Jackendoff (1990: 230) proposes that the postverbal NP is not lexically selected by the verb but is identified on pragmatic grounds: 3.3.c, for instance, is understood to imply a situation in which the subject's action adversely affects the pub (by causing it to become dry) and the drinkers are viewed as acting on the pub rather than on what they drink. Such resultatives as 3.3.c, then, involve the use of a transitive verb whose normal object is left unexpressed.

But what happens when the verb is transitive and the result is also predicated of the postverbal NP (object-oriented) but the NP is selected, as in 3.5 above? As pointed out in connection with 3.5.c in (d) above, the result subevent bounds (i.e. delimits or specifies the end point of) the entire event. Thus, 13 and 14 below differ in that while sentence 13 depicts a simple event which has no temporal delimitation (i.e. has no end point implied), 14 conveys a complex/causative relation of subevents in which the hammering culminated when the metal was rendered flat (through hammering). In other words, resultative phrases serve to delimit events by specifying an accomplished location or state.

- 13) They hammered the metal.

14) They hammered the metal flat.

With verbs that are lexically bounded (i.e. that have an intrinsic endpoint), the resultative phrase further specifies the achieved state, as in sentences 1.a-d above or 15 and 16 below<sup>7</sup>.

15) The lid of the boiler clunked shut.

16) The pond froze solid.

### 3. TEFL activities

This section endeavours to relate the theory on resultative constructions discussed in the previous section to TEFL and show different types of activities that can be done in class to help students practise and make sense of the various resultative patterns<sup>8</sup>. In an attempt to establish a very clear connection, the sentences used in the exercises here will be the same as those discussed above. For reasons of space, the exercises will be sketched very briefly.

1) Put the words in order.

- a) bottle / open / the / broke
- b) banged / window / shut / the
- c) the / I / clean / floor / wiped
- d) worked / bone / my / I / fingers / the / to

2) Paraphrase these sentences using the word/s in brackets.

- a) The prisoner died because he froze. (to death)
- b) Dad shouted so much that he became hoarse. (himself)
- c) The dog woke us with its barking. (awake)
- d) The shopkeeper's grumbling caused her to become calm. (grumbled)

3) Let's discuss the following.

- a) According to the sentence *He slept himself sober*, which happened first: *he became sober* or *he slept*?
- b) If you say *Robin danced out of the room*, did Robin dance (while he was) in the room?
- c) Who became free when you say *The men followed the dogs free of their captors*?

- d) According to the sentence *The joggers slowly and steadily ran the pavement thin*, did the joggers run slowly and steadily or did the pavement slowly and steadily become thin?
- 4) Correct the mistakes in the following sentences.
  - a) The cows ate sick.
  - b) The bottle broke opened.
  - c) She's going to fret sick herself at this rate.
  - d) I'm glad you didn't stay at the club drinking yourself.
- 5) How do the following pairs of sentences compare?
  - a) He hammered the metal. – He hammered the metal flat.
  - b) They danced a tango. – They danced a tango across the room.
  - c) We pulled the crate. – We pulled the crate out of the water.
  - d) She rocked the baby to sleep. – She slowly rocked the baby to sleep.

#### **4. Conclusions**

This paper has sought to outline English resultative constructions in simple semantic and grammatical terms so as to render them accessible to EFL teachers and students who are new to the topic. In this attempt, three groups of resultative patterns have been presented, taking into account whether they are made up of one or two subevents and, in the latter cases, whether or not the subevents are temporally dependent. In the first two resultative patterns, the result is typically subject-oriented (except for verbs of exerting force) whereas in the third group, the result is predicated of the postverbal NP. In addition, the resultatives in the third group involve subevents in a causative relation which may or may not have the same temporal scope. Also, in this third group of resultatives, the resulting state provides a culmination for the composite (derived) event denoted by the whole construction, which, for many linguists, is a distinguishing feature of resultatives in all cases, even when there are no distinct subevents.

When dealing with resultative constructions in EFL classrooms, it could be useful to point out the following key aspects:

- a) Resultative constructions are event compositions (sometimes consisting of only one but generally of two subevents) in which the verb and the predicated result combine to form a single (derived) event.
- b) The result is predicated of the argument selected as the undergoer of a change of state. This argument may be the subject of the clause or a postverbal NP.
- c) Result phrases denote an end point and/or an accomplished location or state.
- d) When two subevents are combined in resultative constructions, their relation can be construed in temporal and causative terms. In these cases, there are two NPs, one for each subevent (i.e. one for the causing subevent and another NP for the resulting subevent).

## Notes

- 1. The classification here is largely based on Rappaport Hovav and Levin (2001) and some of the examples come from the same source.
- 2. Some linguists (e.g. Rappaport Hovav and Levin 2001, Vespoor 1997 and Wechsler 1997, among others) consider it irrelevant to subclassify intransitive verbs as unaccusative or unergative and claim that the adoption of the unaccusative hypothesis supports syntactic accounts but poses empirical problems for the explanation of English resultatives. Instead, Rappaport Hovav and Levin (2001: 766), for example, endorse a semantic account in which “the explanatory burden is borne by event structure representations, well-formedness conditions on these representations, and the principles of mapping from event structure to syntactic structure.” Along the same lines, these two authors disregard the direct object restriction (DOR) that they themselves introduce in Levin and Rappaport Hovav (1995) on the grounds that the result is not always predicated of the verb’s object (as is evident in the examples in 2.2, for instance). Instead, the result may be predicated of the argument selected as the undergoer of a change of state, regardless of its function or position in the sentence.
- 3. The possessive here clearly refers to the subject as Lassie is female.

4. The reason why resultatives involving verbs of exerting force are regarded as simple event structures is the temporal dependence of the two subevents. That is, although these verbs describe the exertion of a force on a physical object but do not entail that the force displaces the object, when the force does cause a displacement, the exertion of force and the displacement occur at the same time, which means that the events are coidentified and therefore temporally dependent.
5. In this and other examples (e.g. *They danced their feet sore* and *He cried his eyes out*) the unselected NP denotes an inalienably possessed part of the body, so the possessor is considered to be the same individual as the referent of the NP in subject position. For the same reason, the pronoun in the postverbal NP in the sentences in 3.2 and 3.4 is reflexive, as it is understood to be coreferential with the subject.
6. Similarly, *The joggers slowly and steadily ran the pavement thin* does not entail that the joggers ran slowly and steadily but that the pavement slowly and steadily became thin.
7. Pustejovsky (1991: 55) does not regard these as resultative constructions but as clauses in which emphatic or manner adjuncts have been added.
8. I would like to thank María Susana Ibáñez and Graciela Palacio for their helpful remarks on this section.

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## **16 The rhetorical information and the meta-language of RA abstracts: A pedagogical proposal**

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### **1. Introduction**

In today's globalized world, knowledge and adequate mastery of a foreign language are regarded as essential tools for personal and professional development. In this sense, the educational actors involved in the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language need more than ever to adapt their teaching practices or approaches so that students can meet the demands of this globalized world brought about by the increasing changes in technology and scientific knowledge.

In the Argentine educational context, English has taken more prominence, a more central role, in the last twenty-five years and this is clearly evident in the predominance of EFL in the school curriculum. In higher education, particularly, in those subjects where English is not the major field of specialization, the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language is offered through English for Specific Purposes (hereafter ESP) courses.

The objective of many ESP courses at Argentine universities, as in many other Latin American and European universities, is mainly to prepare students in the development of reading skills, thus making learners independent readers. Although university students in these courses aim at reading and comprehending authentic texts written in English taken from a variety of sources (books, magazines, Internet, advertisements, encyclopaedias and brochures, among others), they should also need to interpret academic genres, such as: abstracts and scientific research articles (hereafter RAs). In other words, this aspect should be regarded as a priority in ESP courses at university level if one takes into consideration that English is the lingua franca of academic publications in many areas of scientific

knowledge. At the School of Political and Social Sciences, the students attending the ESP course are not accustomed to reading academic genres in English. Therefore, the general objective of this paper is to report on the different steps involved in the design of tasks to raise university students' awareness of the importance of understanding the rhetorical information and the meta-language or lexico-grammatical features of RA abstracts written in English from the field of the social sciences. The idea underlying this objective is not only to introduce changes in the ESP course at the Political and Social Sciences College (UNCuyo) but also to help university students with their future professional and academic activities, once graduated from their corresponding fields of specialization. A course instructing students in the rhetorical structure of RA abstracts under the genre-based approach could pursue the following aims:

- To understand the rhetorical information of the abstract genre from the field of the social sciences.
- To identify the lexico-grammatical features in each of the rhetorical moves which constitute the discourse genre abstract from the field of the social sciences.
- To recognize the communicative function or purpose that the lexico-grammatical features perform within each of the rhetorical moves of the abstract so as to establish the relationship between form and function.
- To make students aware of the abstract's rhetorical organization by reflecting on the order of the moves of the sub-genre abstract.

## **2. Brief theoretical background**

To understand the rhetorical information, the meta-language or lexico-grammatical features and their corresponding communicative functions of the sub-genre *abstract* from the field of the social sciences requires learners to have certain command of the basic vocabulary, the linguistic structures of the English language and different reading skills (skimming, scanning and detailed reading). Therefore, the tasks suggested in this paper are designed for third year university students of Social Communication towards the end of the ESP course at the School of Political and Social Sciences (UNCuyo) since these learners are proficient readers and are already familiar with the basic vocabulary related to their fields of specialization and the linguistic structures (noun phrase, word formation, tenses, passive

voice, among others) which are characteristic features of the sub-genre *abstract*. In other words, the language knowledge of these students can be compared to that of pre-intermediate or intermediate language level learners of a General English course for communicative purposes.

This proposal focuses on the genre-based approach as the main guiding principle. This approach began to be used by ESP researchers for the analysis and the teaching of the written academic language required by non-native English speakers in their fields of specialization. The teaching of writing of academic genres was centered on explanations of the formal components, such as: structural move analysis to describe the rhetorical organizational patterns in different academic genres (Swales, 1981b, 1990; Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988; Salager-Meyer, 1990a, 1990b) and characterizations regarding the linguistic features of these text types (Graetz, 1985; Swales, 1990; Weissberg & Buker, 1990; Salager-Meyer, 1992). Influenced by the New Rhetoric movement, Swales and Feak (1994, 2000, 2009) and Bolívar and Beke (2000), in their writing instructions of academic discourse genres, showed a concern not only in explaining the form but also in associating the communicative function with the formal properties characteristic of the genres they teach. Other researchers began to see the potential of using this genre-based pedagogy to the teaching and learning of strategies to facilitate the reading of those texts required by non-native English speakers in their disciplinary and professional fields (Hewings & Henderson, 1987; Salager-Meyer, 1991; Hyon, 1996; Minaabad & Khoshkholgh, 2012). Therefore, this proposal adopts a genre-based approach as a pedagogical tool for the understanding of the rhetorical information and the communicative function entailed by the lexico-grammatical features characteristic of the sub-genre abstract.

### **3. RA informative abstracts in English: Suggested steps in task design**

According to Day (1988), “an informative abstract is devised to condense each of the main sections of a research article” (p. 23). This type of abstract is usually read before one actually reads the paper, thus providing readers with an overview of the main contents of the research. Although informative abstracts are reduced texts, they contain a bulk of features that readers need to take into account in terms of the information itself, the meta-language, that is, the lexico-grammatical features and the communicative functions

underlying them. It is important to note that ESP teachers when designing tasks for academic genres such as abstracts should consider the following steps:

- I- In the selection of the informative abstracts in L2, different aspects need to be taken into consideration: a) the topic, i.e., the abstracts should be chosen according to students' familiarity with the content; b) the abstracts should be of medium length (maximum 200 words) since when they are used for teaching and learning purposes, this becomes an important feature to be observed (J. M. Swales, personal communication, October 6, 2012) and c) the source: abstracts need to be authentic texts, i.e., taken from an international journal such as 'Mass Communication and Society'. It is also important to highlight that the abstracts should be indexed in different on-line retrieval systems (Scopus, ComAbstracts ; ComIndex; EBSCOhost Online Research Databases; Family Index Database; Sociological Abstracts ; Social Services Abstracts ; among others). On the other hand, the abstracts need to be written by native speakers of the English language or by academics who are knowledgeable in the language. This guarantees quality in the production of these texts.
- II- Before designing each of the tasks, the teacher should have a deep understanding of the rhetorical structure (=macrostructure) and the lexico-grammatical components characteristic of the sub-genre abstract since these aspects can also present variations. In other words, not all of them begin and end in the same way, that is, they may be different in terms of their rhetorical organization or structure. Besides, they may also vary in terms of the lexico-grammatical features or meta-language employed.
- III- For students to be familiar with the sub-genre abstract, tasks should be systematically designed. In this sense, the teacher must be a strategic materials designer, enhancing students' learning process, particularly, when students are not accustomed to dealing with academic genres. The criteria used for the systematization or grading of the different tasks for the understanding of the sub-genre abstract of RAs in English from the field of the social sciences are specified below:

- a) As regards the practice of reading strategies, for example skimming, a task can aim at asking students to superficially look at the paratextual cues such as the abstract's title, keywords, the source in order to get the general topic of the text. On the other hand, if the abstract contains dates, numbers, percentages or even acronyms, students can relate these features with their corresponding information. Therefore, the reading strategy 'scanning' is fostered since this type of task aims at making students read the text quickly in search for specific information without necessarily reading word for word or each of the sentences.
- b) By considering the macrostructure or the typical rhetorical organization of informative abstracts from the field of the social sciences, i.e., the IMRD format or pattern, the teacher can develop tasks to make students aware of the lexico-grammatical features in each of the rhetorical sections or moves of the sub-genre abstract.
- c) In terms of the Introduction section, students can focus on metadiscourse phrases (e.g. 'This study examines ...', 'This paper reports on ...', 'The goal of this study was to study ...', 'The purpose of the current study was to understand ...', among others) and by resorting to their prior knowledge of grammar, they can identify different elements of the noun phrase and the verb phrase. The next step is to make students aware of the relationship between the lexico-grammatical component and its communicative function, thus establishing, in terms of the genre-based approach, what is called form-function relationship (e.g.: to outline the main purpose/s of the study, to announce the present research). On the basis of what has been done so far, learners can also relate the lexico-grammatical feature and its communicative function with the corresponding rhetorical section or move. This latter task aims at enhancing students' identification of the rhetorical organization of the sub-genre abstract. As a next step or task, a reading comprehension question can be formulated in relation to the Introduction section of the abstract where students can put into practice the strategy 'detailed reading', for example: What did the author/s do in the study?

- d) As regards the sentences corresponding to the Methods section of the abstract, a task can be designed for students to identify lexico-grammatical features like noun phrases, verb phrases, tenses, passive voice, transparent words or cognates, among others which are typical lexico-grammatical components of this rhetorical move (e.g.: Young adults (N = 472) completed online surveys...) Once these elements are identified by students, the following task can make students relate these features with their corresponding communicative functions, such as: to indicate the subjects of the study; the procedures; the instruments, among others. By reflecting on the previous tasks, students can deduce which sentences within the abstract correspond /to the rhetorical move 'Methods'. Then, in order to practice the strategy 'detailed reading', a reading comprehension task can be designed for the Methods' rhetorical section, e.g.: How did the author/s carry out the study?
- e) A task related to the lexico-grammatical features of the Results section can be centred on the identification of the noun phrase, transparent words, verb phrase, tenses, adverbs, comparison, among other components (e.g.: ...Our findings indicate ..., ... Exposure to American media was found to correlate positively with ...; ...Male participants who were exposed to hip-hop music videos of highly sexual content expressed greater objectification of women, sexual permissiveness, ... than male participants in the low sex condition ...,) and then to associate these elements to their communicative functions, for example: to indicate the results; to evaluate the results; to compare results, among others. On the basis of these tasks, students can identify which sentences within the abstract correspond to the rhetorical section or move 'Results'. A final task for this section can include a reading comprehension question which requires learners to carefully read the sentence/s corresponding to this move, for example: What did the author/s find in their study?
- f) In terms of the Discussion section, a task can be designed in order to make students aware not only of the lexico-grammatical features, such as: noun

phrase, transparent words, verb phrase, tenses (e.g.: ... It was concluded that ..., ... this study suggests that U.S. entertainment may influence attitude toward Americans in a positive direction..., ...Implications ... are discussed, ... These depictions have important implications for the learning of ...) and their corresponding communicative functions (to present the conclusions, to indicate the implications or applications) characteristic of this rhetorical move. After having put into practice these tasks, learners will be in a position to recognize the corresponding rhetorical section. Finally, a reading comprehension task may follow in order to practice the strategy ‘detailed reading’, e.g.: Which conclusion/s did author/s arrive at?

#### **4. Conclusions and implications for teaching**

The tasks proposed in this paper for the understanding of the rhetorical information and the meta-language of RA abstracts in English from the field of the social sciences, based on a personal interest in introducing a new approach, can contribute to improve the teaching and learning process of ESP at university level. However, these tasks can indeed be improved, that is, what is proposed in this study is open to changes, reformulations or adjustments. This can also be achieved by working in conjunction with other colleagues and specialists in the field of Social Communication.

It is important to highlight that the learning of academic genres in English, such as RA abstracts, can be troublesome, particularly, when students do not possess the language level required to deal with the meta-language characteristic of discourse genres. Thus, the tasks suggested in this paper are proposed to be implemented with 3rd year students of Social Communication because these learners are already acquainted not only with the reading comprehension strategies but also with different linguistic structures (e.g.: noun/verb phrases, passive voice, comparison, discourse markers, among others), two important elements when dealing with RA abstracts in English.

One aspect that needs to be stressed is related to the fact that the acquisition of the lexico-grammatical features characteristic of the sub-genre abstract, their communicative functions, that is to say, form and function correlation and the relationship between the lexico-grammatical components to their rhetorical moves or sections requires a careful



systematization in the design of the tasks under the genre-based approach. In other words, this systematization is necessary, particularly, when considering the target group this study was addressed to, that is, university students of a non-language subject with limited but specific skills in and knowledge of English. Besides, the fact that each of the tasks were systematically organized may contribute not only to raise students' awareness of the importance of learning a different text type, that is, the sub-genre abstract but this systematization can also foster students' understanding of the various features of RA abstracts in English from the field of the Social Sciences. Thus, the tasks proposed in this paper, under the genre-based approach, were systematically designed in order to sensitize learners to the importance of: a) the understanding of the rhetorical information characteristic of RA abstracts in English from the field of the Social Sciences; b) the identification of the lexico-grammatical features or meta-language; c) the recognition of the communicative functions conveyed by the lexico-grammatical elements; and d) the detection of the rhetorical organization of informative RA abstracts .

As stated in the preceding section of this paper, the teacher needs to be acquainted with the sub-genre abstract in terms of the lexico-grammatical features or exponents, their communicative functions and the rhetorical organization or structure since all these components are key elements when dealing with academic or discourse genres. This familiarity can be achieved by analysing different informative abstracts from the field he/she wants to teach. By doing this, the teacher can have a thorough understanding of: a) how RA abstracts in English from the field of the social sciences are typically organized or structured; b) the most common or recurrent lexico-grammatical features or meta-language; and c) the communicative functions underlying these lexico-grammatical elements. With this information in mind, the teacher can also design a table specifying each rhetorical section/move, the subsections or steps, the communicative functions or purposes and different examples taken from the abstracts in order to illustrate the lexico-grammatical features characteristic of each move and steps. Finally, since the teacher needs to be a facilitator of his/her students' learning process, the systematization of the tasks and the design of this table are of vital importance because they can undoubtedly aid learners while carrying out each of the tasks proposed in this paper.

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